

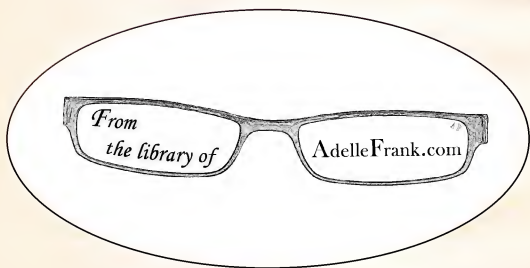
RE. OTT

Manual
of
Worship and Polity
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

REVISED EDITION

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Foreword

The Church of the Brethren combines a strong congregationalism with an even stronger sense of brotherhood. It, therefore, cannot be easily stereotyped as to worship and polity; neither can it be regarded as static in these important areas of church life.

In the last generation the theory and practice of worship have received major attention among both lay and ministerial leadership. The production of a new manual of worship aids has been encouraged by factors such as the following: questing spirits earnestly seeking God in whatever ways may be helpful for being found by Him, the publication of a newly revised English version of the Bible, the production of a new Brethren hymnal, widespread building projects in all sections of the country, the revision of old and the development of new worship techniques, the worship values received from ecumenical fellowship, and the constantly rising educational level of the membership of the denomination. While there have been changes in the arts and aids of worship, the contents of the manual's worship section make it clear that our basic faith has not been uprooted but rather planted deeper.

In polity the Church of the Brethren has been striving for clear and understandable procedures which will unify and strengthen the life, program, and outreach of the Brotherhood. In the Annual Conferences of 1946 and 1947 a plan of major denominational reorganization was adopted which made obsolete the manual then in use.

This new manual of worship and polity was author-

ized by the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board—Church of the Brethren as a successor to the 1946 ministers' manual. It represents a major effort to bring up to date the enactments of Annual Conference since 1946 and to provide a handbook of worship, organization, and program aids for ministers, moderators, and other church leaders. Because of the quality of its contents and their broad usefulness for many types of churchmen, there is every reason to believe that this manual will render an important service in the life of the Brotherhood.

Though many had a part in preparing this manual, special recognition of the compiling committee appointed by the Ministry and Home Mission Commission is well deserved: DeWitt L. Miller, Glen Weimer, Charles E. Zunkel and Ora W. Garber.

The ever-present and sometimes difficult problem of determining the ownership of quoted materials has been handled with exacting care, and permission to quote these materials has been secured and duly acknowledged in every case in which ownership could be determined. Any oversights or errors have been wholly unintentional. Most Biblical quotations, other than those found in liturgies and ceremonies secured from other publishers, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible and are used by permission of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, the copyright holder.

The production of a new manual is inherent evidence of freedom vital to the life of the church. No religious society or movement can long endure which does not adapt and apply itself and its body of faith and program to the living generation. In a measure, this manual evidences the church's desire to do precisely that.

—Norman J. Baugher

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PART ONE

Forms and Ceremonies

I. SERVICES OF THE HOME AND FAMILY

All of life must become sacramental. Each aspect of life is an offering unto God. The whole of human experience is to be made worship, a giving of life to God in accord with the spirit and mind of Christ. The hallowing of work, play, and love is the only path to the fulfillment of life and the redemption of the world. When every task and experience becomes an altar of devotion to God the winter of the world will pass and a spiritual springtime will come.

A. *Betrothal or Engagement*

The sacrament of betrothal should come toward the end of a period of study and counseling with the pastor covering the physical, mental, emotional, and religious phases of living involved in marriage. The whole intent is to discover the nature and character of marriage and what it takes in a man and a woman to achieve a happy, God-honoring relationship. Moreover, it provides the opportunity for discovering the problems of intimate family life and learning how to meet them creatively before they occur. It provides also an opportunity for learning the creative approach to differences so that values may be found even in them. And finally, it guards against a hasty decision to marry before knowing whether the two are suited to each other.

When, after this period of searching and learning has satisfied the couple and they now want to indicate in a sacred and symbolic way that they intend to marry, a simple but beautiful betrothal service can be held in the sanctuary of the church, or at an outdoor altar, or at the bride's home. There should be only the couple and either the parents of the two or a chosen friend of each with the minister present at this sacrament. The simple ritual would have been previously worked out by the couple with the minister, and would involve a brief declaration of intention to go forward now in

making full preparation for marriage and the establishing of a home. The declarations of intention should be symbolized with the giving of the engagement ring or some other symbol and concluded with a carefully prepared prayer by the minister, or by a carefully prepared prayer which the couple and the minister will pray together.

B. *Marriage*

The Church of the Brethren regards marriage as an institution of divine origin and has always upheld and sought to preserve the sanctity of the home and the marriage relationship. It is a bond of true love resting upon the innate needs of man and woman and therefore of human society. It cannot be set aside by any human authority. The church regards moral unfaithfulness as the only justifiable basis for severing the marriage relation. The church holds that marriage should issue in affectionate home and family life and in the rich and tender relationships of parenthood (Genesis 2: 18; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-31). See Annual Meeting minutes, 1933.

MARRIAGE LITURGIES

*First Marriage Service*¹

The persons to be married shall present themselves before the minister, the woman standing at the left hand of the man. Then, all present reverently standing, the minister shall say to the company:

Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God, to join this man and this woman in holy marriage; which is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all men. Let us therefore reverently remember that God has established and sanctified marriage, for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Saviour has declared that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relation to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble, and sor-

¹ Adapted from *The Book of Common Worship*, 1932 edition, by permission of the Westminster Press.

row; in honesty and industry to provide for each other and for their household in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever blessed God, whose presence is the happiness of every condition, and whose favor sweetens every relation; we beseech Thee to be present and favorable unto these Thy servants, that they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of marriage. As Thou hast brought them together by Thy providence, sanctify them by Thy Spirit, giving them a new frame of heart for their new estate; and grant unto them, now in the hour of their alliance and throughout their wedded life, Thy heavenly guidance; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then the minister shall say to the man:

....., wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?

The man shall answer: I will.

Then the minister shall say to the woman:

....., wilt thou have this man to be thy husband, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?

The woman shall answer: I will.

Then the minister may say:

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

Then the father (or guardian or any friend) of the woman


shall put her right hand into the hand of the minister, who shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand and to say after him as follows:

I,, take thee,; To be my wedded wife; And I do promise and covenant; Before God and these witnesses; To be thy loving and faithful husband; In plenty and in want; In joy and in sorrow; In sickness and in health; As long as we both shall live.

Then shall they loose their hands; and the woman with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the minister:

I,, take thee,; To be my wedded husband; And I do promise and covenant; Before God and these witnesses; To be thy loving and faithful wife; In plenty and in want; In joy and in sorrow; In sickness and in health; As long as we both shall live.

Then, if a ring be provided it shall be given by the man to the woman, and by the woman to the minister, who shall then return it to the man, who shall put it upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand, saying after the minister:

 This ring I give thee;—In token and pledge;—Of our constant faith;—And abiding love.

Then the minister shall say:

Let us pray.

Most merciful and gracious God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; bestow upon these Thy servants the seal of Thine approval, and Thy fatherly benediction; granting unto them grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made. Guide them together, we beseech Thee, in the happy way of righteousness and peace, that loving and serving Thee, with one heart and mind, all the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of Thine everlasting grace, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Then shall the minister say unto all who are present:

By the authority committed unto me as a minister of the Church of Christ, I declare that and are now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God, and the law of this state: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, causing the husband and wife to join their right hands, the minister shall say:

Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

The minister shall pronounce this blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace: Both now and in the life everlasting. Amen.

Second Marriage Service²

The persons to be married shall stand before the minister, the woman standing at the man's left hand. The minister shall say:

Dearly beloved, we are assembled ~~in this~~ ^{HERE} sanctuary in the presence of God, to unite this man and this woman in holy marriage. From the earliest beginning of mankind, marriage was instituted by God for the well-being and happiness of His people, as a sacred and divine partnership. Marriage was sanctified and blessed by Jesus of Nazareth,

² Prepared by Edward K. Ziegler.

and adorned by His presence at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. He solemnly declared that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. The New Testament exalts marriage as the symbol of the mystical union of Christ and His church. Among all human relationships, marriage is most sacred, satisfying, and permanent. Wherefore it should be entered upon reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. In this sacred relationship, these two persons come now to be joined.

Let us pray.

O God our Father, whose very nature is love, and from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; look now with Thy favor upon these Thy servants who come into Thy holy presence to make their vows of love and loyalty and to seek Thy benediction upon their marriage. Send upon them Thy Holy Spirit that He may sanctify them and make them truly one. Help them to grow together in true love and in perfect peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then, speaking to the man the minister shall say:

....., will you have this woman to be your wife, and will you pledge your troth to her in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and loyalty, to live with her and cherish her according to the will of God in holy marriage?

The man shall say: I will.

Then, speaking to the woman the minister shall say:

....., will you have this man to be your husband, and will you pledge your troth to him in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and loyalty, to live with him and cherish him according to the will of God in holy marriage?

The woman shall say: I will.

Then the minister shall say:

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

The father or other person who performs this act shall say: I do.

Then the minister shall cause the man and the woman to repeat after him the marriage vows:

I,, take thee,, to be my wedded wife—I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses—to be thy loving and faithful husband—in plenty and in want—in joy and in sorrow—in sickness and in health—to love, honor, and cherish—as long as we both shall live.

I,, take thee, to be my wedded husband—I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses—to be thy loving and faithful wife—in plenty and in want—in joy and in sorrow—in sickness and in health—to love, honor, and cherish—as long as we both shall live.)

Then shall the minister say to the man:

What ~~symbol~~ of your love and loyalty do you give as a pledge that you will faithfully perform your vows?

Then the man shall give the ring to the minister, who shall return it to him saying:

Let this ring be the symbol of your undying love and perfect devotion. - TURN BACK PAGE *

Then the man shall place the ring upon the third finger of the woman's left hand. The minister shall place his hand upon theirs and pray:

→ O God of all love and grace, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named, bestow upon these Thy servants the seal of Thine approval and Thy fatherly benediction. Grant unto them grace to fulfill with pure and steadfast devotion the solemn vows here between them made. Give them a clear vision of Thy purposes and a portion of Thy spirit that they may live together with one heart and one mind in perfect human love, reflecting in

their common life the union of Christ and His church.

Grant them to grow in reverence for each other and for Thee. Send upon their home tranquility and peace. Give them grace to rear their children in godliness and Christian character. Guide their steps, protect them through all danger, spare them to each other in health and joy, and use them to Thy glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then the minister shall say:

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have pledged to each other their fidelity and love in the sight of God and this company, I therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, pronounce them to be husband and wife, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Whom therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder. - *LET US PRAY*

May God the Father bless, preserve, and keep you. The Lord look with His favor upon you and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may so live together in this life that God may be honored in you and that your lives may be filled with His peace. Amen. *Kiss the bride*

Then may follow this service of consecration, if the newly married couple are entering some type of Christian professional service.

The minister shall say:

It is your desire to consecrate your newly united life to the Kingdom of God. He has called you to share in a consecrated ministry to His children. You have pledged your life to God and His work in the world.

Do you now dedicate your life together, your shared minds and strength, your toil and your leisure, the joys of your home, to Christlike service of the children of God,

wherever He may call you, with all your heart and soul and mind and strength?

The husband and wife shall answer: We do.

Then the husband and wife shall kneel for the prayer of consecration.

O God, who hast set the solitary in families, and who dost join the hearts of Thy children in bonds of strong and loyal love, we give Thee thanks for the new partnership of love which Thou hast sanctified and blessed in this hour. We beseech Thee to accept the consecration of this man and this woman, who offer upon Thine altar the shared treasure of their common life. Take Thou their lives, their minds, their bodies, their skills, their home, and use them to the glory of Thy name and the service of mankind. Send them forth armored with Thy power to resist evil, with clear vision to see the world through Thine eyes of sympathy and compassion, and with infinite tenderness and skill to minister to Thy children in the name of their Christ. As they go forth to serve Thee, give them wide margins of spiritual resource around their every need, and deep wells from which to draw their comfort. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

A Third Marriage Service³

Declaration

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together to witness the coming of these two, and, who present

³ Prepared by Roy A. Burkhardt. Reprinted from *From Friendship to Marriage* by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

themselves to me as a minister of the gospel seeking the sacrament of Holy Marriage.

Invocation

Let us pray: Great Spirit, breathe upon this scene thy blessing. Sanctify the purposes which have led these two people to this moment. Bless them as they take their vows so that they may do it with all the sincerity of which they are capable. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

The Charge

I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundations of a happy and enduring home. If the solemn vows which you are about to make be kept permanent, and if steadfastly you seek to do the will of your Heavenly Father, your life will be full of peace and joy, and the home which you are establishing will abide through every change.

Betrothal Vows

....., do you take to be your wedded wife, and in the presence of these witnesses do you vow that you will do everything in your power to make your love for her a growing part of your life? Will you continue to feed it from day to day and week to week and year to year from the best resources of your manhood? Will you stand by her in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, and will you shun all others and keep yourself to her alone so long as you both shall live?

.....: I will.

....., do you take to be your wedded husband, and in the presence of all these witnesses, do you vow that you will do everything in your power to make your love for him a growing part of your life? Will you continue to feed it from day to day and week to week and year to year

from the best resources of your womanhood? Will you stand by him in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, and will you shun all others and keep yourself to him alone so long as you both shall live?

.....: I will.

Giving of the Bride

Who gives in marriage?

The Marriage Vows

Do you have some vows of your love to pledge to each other?

The Groom: I,, take thee,, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. To this I pledge thee my faith.

The Bride: I,, take thee,, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. To this I pledge thee my faith.

Ring Ceremony

Do you have some symbol of your love to present to this your bride?

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love. This ring is a worthy symbol of a love that is sincere and of motives that are pure. I dedicate it to the joint purposes for which you both set it apart. As you give it to your bride, it becomes a symbol to all the world of your love for her. In receiving that ring, she testifies to her love for you. Only one person has a right to place that ring on her finger, and that person is you.

The Groom (placing ring): In token and pledge of my constant faith and abiding love, with this ring I thee wed.

The Bride (receiving ring): In receiving this ring I do it as an outward testimony of my love.

Prayer of Consecration
(Kneeling)

O God, our hearts are touched by the wonder of this scene. It is at a time like this when we wonder what the source of love and kindness and high purpose is. We believe that that source is Thee.

Pronouncement

Love through eternity endures.

For God is love and love is God.

Thank God for Love—His first, then Yours.

—*John Oxenham*

Forasmuch as and have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company and have pledged their faith and love to each other, and have declared the same by joining hands, and by the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife. Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

NOTES ON THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

The minister should familiarize himself with the details and the usual procedure of the marriage service. He should be in a position to advise in matters pertaining to the service. The marriage ceremony should be beautiful and impressive, carefully planned and rehearsed, so that those participating may be familiar with the order of service. The following may be of value:

1. Marriage laws differ in the several states. In some an official certificate from the probate judge conferring legal authority to marry is necessary. Before consenting to perform a marriage ceremony in any state the minister should inform himself definitely in every case; otherwise serious embarrassment may result.

2. Ushers are responsible for seating guests, lighting candles, and other details of this character.

3. The best man serves the groom. He looks after the license, fee, trunk, cars, etc. The minister may consult him concerning any detail of which he is uncertain.

4. The procession is in the following order:

The minister

The groom and the best man

The ushers (men)

The bride's maids (single)

The maid of honor

The flower girls

The bride alone or with her father or another

5. In the recessional the bride takes the right arm of her husband and they leave the altar followed by the maid of honor alone, the flower girls side by side, the bride's maids and last the ushers. The only man and woman advancing side by side should be the wedded pair. The best man and the minister return to the side room from which they came, after which the best man hastens to meet the wedding party in the vestibule.

6. The minister usually takes his place for the ceremony from the most convenient entrance when the processional music begins if he does not enter with the bridal party.

7. The bride stands always at the left of the groom and takes his left arm when given away by her father. If not given away, she takes the arm of the groom when she first comes to the altar.

PRAYERS

Prayer of a Bride

Almighty God, I pour out my heart in thanksgiving for the new joy that has come to ennoble my soul. Make me worthy of Thy gift and of the loving devotion of him whom Thy providence gives me as the companion of my life. Fill me with the spirit of the faithful daughters of Israel, whose virtues have caused the hearts of their husbands to trust in them safely to the end of their days. May my lips speak with the wisdom of those who have so fondly guided and trained me for the sacred duties upon which I am now to enter.

Grant me Thy help to fulfill the tasks of a true and devoted wife. May I realize how false is grace, how vain is beauty; and that she alone is blessed whom the Lord leads to acts of kindness and

deeds of mercy. Enable me, O God, to develop those noble traits of character which are the foundation of a true home. Amen.

Prayer of a Bridegroom

Almighty God and Father, as I am about to enter into the bond of wedlock, I pray for Thy light and Thy blessing. Open my eyes to see that the love in my heart is a gift from Thy hand, to increase my happiness and to add worth and significance to my life. Help me to fulfill all the duties of my new life. May I always be worthy of the trust and devotion of my beloved. May I always be to her a faithful husband, a true friend and protector.

Let Thy blessing rest upon the home we shall establish together. May it be a home where love and peace, mutual forbearance and devotion shall always abide. May the spirit of religion ever pervade its atmosphere. Give me the vision to see that without Thy presence to sustain and comfort us we shall fail to fulfill the divine plan for our lives.

May ours be a union of hands for honest toil and fruitful effort. May we work and strive together through days of joy and sorrow, to achieve the happiness for which our hearts are yearning.
—*From Union Home Prayer Book*⁴

Prayer for All True Lovers

We invoke thy gentlest blessings, our Father, on all true lovers. We praise thee for the great longing that draws the soul of man and maid together and bids them leave all the dear bonds of the past to cleave to one another. We thank thee for the revealing power of love which divinizes in the one beloved the mystic beauty and glory of humanity. We thank thee for the transfiguring power of love which ripens and ennobles our nature, calling forth the hidden stores of tenderness and strength and overcoming the selfishness of youth by the passion of self-surrender.

We pray thee to make their love strong, holy, and deathless, that no misunderstandings may fray the bond, and no gray disenchantment of the years may have power to quench the heavenly light that now glows in them. May they early gain wisdom to discern the true values of life, and may no tyranny of fashion and no glamour of cheaper joys filch from them the wholesome peace and inward satisfaction which only loyal love can give.

⁴ Reprinted by permission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Grant them with sober eyes to look beyond these sweet days of friendship to the generations yet to come, and to realize that the home for which they long will be part of the sacred tissue of the body of humanity in which thou art to dwell, that so they may reverence themselves and drink the cup of joy with awe.—*Walter Rauschenbusch*.⁵

A Wedding Prayer

Our Father, who Thyself art love, we thank Thee for the marriage of these Thy children this day before Thee. Follow them all the days of their life with the light of Thy presence. May they ever grow in grace of spirit, and in wisdom with the years. Lead them out into a large place. Like the wideness of Thy mercy, may their love reach out to all the peoples of the earth. May they be dedicated in Thy love to the service of mankind. And now, as we wait before Thee, grant to these Thy children, and to us all, the infinite benediction of that inner peace which passes understanding.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*James Myers* ⁶

C. Home Dedication

Among Christian people there is a new and growing custom of consecrating a home. Such an act places an emphasis on the sacredness of the home and on the distinctness of the new family. The very fact that a family cares enough about spiritual values to put them into its program will be likely to give their home stability and a sense of high fellowship. Such a service may well be held in a new home, with the kindling of the first fire on the hearth. This continues the old ceremony of "the hanging of the crane" in the new house, which symbolizes the beginning of home life in that house.

⁵ Reprinted from Rauschenbusch's *Prayers of the Social Awakening* by permission of the Pilgrim Press.

⁶ Reprinted from *Prayers, Personal and Social* by permission of the National Council of Churches.

A HOME DEDICATION SERVICE⁷

(To be conducted by the minister)

In this modern service for the consecration of a home a few simple symbols are used. These are:

First, *the candle*, a symbol of light;

Second, *the fire*, a symbol of home life;

Third, *the salt*, a symbol of the protection of life;

Fourth, *the water*, a symbol of the Divine Spirit;

Fifth, *the bread*, a symbol of hospitality.

If there be a fireplace in the house, wood should be laid upon the hearth, with an abundance of kindling, but the fire is not to be lighted until the proper time comes in the service. Lacking a fireplace, a brazier may be used as a substitute, or the actual kindling of the fire may be omitted.

In front of the fireplace a small table should be placed for the other symbols. Place on the table an unlighted candle and matches. Place also a small open dish with common salt; a pitcher of water and a goblet; and a plate with bread on it.

The minister who conducts the service should be seated beside the table, facing the fireplace, the table being at his right hand.

When the members of the household and the guests assemble, they should sit or stand, facing also the fireplace. The minister should provide the head of the house with at least one copy of that part of this service which contains the response, "*We dedicate this house,*" so that the responses may be given at the appropriate time.

The action of the service is significant, and should be made emphatic. The candle is to be Lighted. The fire is to be Kindled (the minister kneels while he does this). The salt is to be Scattered. The water is to be Poured. The bread is to be Broken. Each action is performed at its own proper time as the service progresses. When all is ready, the minister reads the Interpretation and the appropriate poetry.

INTERPRETATION

Dearly beloved, members of this household and guests:
We are assembled here to dedicate this Christian home, in

⁷ From the *Pulpit and Parish Manual*, prepared by Henry Hallam Saunders. Reprinted by permission of the Pilgrim Press, copyright owners. The Oxenham quotations are from *The Te Deums and the Sacraments*, and are used by permission of the Pilgrim Press.

the hope that it may be a place of happiness, adding life's meaning for all who shall call it "home."

Home was the first institution which God, our Father, established for His children. Before the Church and before any form of civil government, the home was a divine institution. Love was the first bond which linked human lives together, and the home was its expression. The home became the nursery of religion, of education, of civilization, of culture, of beauty, of progress. In all the advance of human life, the home is still the greatest of human institutions and the most vital expression of the Divine Presence in human life.

In primitive homes, our far-off ancestors found shelter from the elements. There they lighted the candle, kindled the fire, protected their food with salt, poured water that thirst might be quenched, and broke bread that hunger might be satisfied. Home-life and hospitality were expressed in these simple things. Today they are our picturesque and expressive symbols by which we make vivid the meaning of the life of this home. In this service we consecrate this home to human happiness and to faith in the Divine Father. Let us hear a message from God's Word.

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

Through wisdom is a house builded,
And by understanding it is established,
And by knowledge are the chambers filled with all precious
and pleasant riches.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto thy children;
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us;
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.

The Vision of a Poet

I'm building me a wonder-house,
 Apart from busy ways;
And there I mean to shelter me
 In gladness all my days.

The fabric is the love-of-friends,
 Cemented strong and stout;
With four-square walls of loyalty
 To keep unkindness out.

The porch is broad, the threshold wide;
 I'll have no bolt nor bar;
And for a hospitable sign
 The door shall stand ajar.

The light of trust and sympathy
 In every nook will shine,
And laughter like a breeze shall blow
 Through all this house of mine.

The house will never be complete;
 But adding one by one
The soaring gables, builded firm,
 I'll rear it toward the sun,

Until the turrets pierce the clouds
 And starry cressets wear;
When angels walk upon the roof,
 And God comes down the stair.

—*Abbie Farwell Brown*

THE CEREMONY OF THE CANDLE

If this service is conducted in the evening, the lights in the room may be turned out at this point, so that the lighting of the candle shall be more vivid.

The minister lights the candle and then reads:

A Message From the Bible

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world.

Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will lighten my darkness.

The Vision of a Poet

In that far-off dim dawn
When chaos reigned, and earth was still
A formless void in darkness deep,
The Spirit, brooding o'er the void,
Awoke creation from its sleep
With that high call,—

LET THERE BE LIGHT.

And instant from the depths of night
Sprang forth the mystic seven-fold beam,
Ablaze with wonders bright.
God in his wisdom all supreme
As his first act created Light
So unto him give praise,
Praise without ceasing! Praise!
That in his wisdom infinite,
When making Man for his delight,
Before he dowered him with sight,
He filled the world with radiance bright,

Lest, dulled with fear and void of hope,
With stumbling footsteps he should grope
Through an eternal night.
To God eternal, praise!
Praise without ceasing! Praise!
That in his goodness infinite
He blessed the world with Light.
Subserve it to his high employ,
And see thou use it right!

—*John Oxenham*

THE CEREMONY OF THE FIRE

The minister reads:

The Interpretation of Fire

Of primitive man it was written: He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it and baketh bread. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh, yea, he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire.

Very early in human life the discovery was made that fire could be a dangerous enemy; and another discovery was made, that fire could be a wonderful ally. The fireplace, in the shelter of a home, was one of the very early attempts to control this strange element and to make it useful. Fire enters into the religion of primitive men, for the ascending flames suggest the aspirations of the soul. This thought continues in the beautiful hymn, written nearly two centuries ago,—

Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
Both speed them to their source.

So my soul, derived from God,
Pants to view his glorious face;
Upwards tends to his abode
To rest in his embrace.

The minister then kneels and lights the fire in the fireplace.
When it is burning brightly, he reads the poem which follows:

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently, and thankful be
For God's unfailing charity
And on the ascending flame inspire
A little prayer, that shall upbear
The incense of your thankfulness
For this sweet grace
Of warmth and light!
For here again is sacrifice
For your delight.

Within the wood,
That lived a joyous life
Through sunny days and rainy days
And winter storm and strife,—

.

Within the coal,
Where forests lie entombed,
Oak, elm, and chestnut, beech and red
pine bole,—
God shrined his sunshine, and entombed
For you these stores of light and heat,
Your life-joys to complete.
These all have died that you might live;
Yours now the high prerogative
To loose their long captivities,—
To give them new sweet span of life
And fresh activities.

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently,
And grateful be
To God for his unfailing charity!
There is something about a torch-lit fire
That kindles the tinder of lost desire;

That wakes in the rose-gray glow of embers
The flaming April that love remembers;

The summer haze of toil and trouble,
Becoming an evanescent bubble;

The frosts . . .? They, too, are only seeming;
The fire burns on; it is not dreaming,
But truth that speaks of the fire-lit dome
Of sky and stars as heaven and home.

—*John Oxenham*

THE CEREMONY OF THE SALT

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Every oblation of thy meal-offering shalt thou season with salt, neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal-offering: with all thine oblations thou shalt offer salt.

For every one shall be salted with fire; for every offering shall be salted with salt. Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.

The minister shall then sprinkle salt upon the bread that is upon the table, and scatter salt also in the fire. Then he reads,—

The Interpretation of Salt

Thank God for the precious covenant of salt; for salt is the ally of life for the preservation of food and as the symbol

of the healing of our diseases, the symbol of that peace which heals our strife. God grant us here his work of healing, that this house be a place of health and peace. May no ill invade this habitation, and no strife, no fear, no anxiety find entrance at its portals.

We have built a house that is not for time's throwing;
We have gained a peace, unshaken by pain forever.

—*Rupert Brooke*⁸

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

THE CEREMONY OF THE WATER

The minister shall pour water from the pitcher into the goblet, and then read,—

A Message From the Bible

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water. Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it; thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou blessest the springing thereof.

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

A Message From a Poet

Crystal clear from the throne of God
Flows the river, the shining river,
Forever full, forever free,
It floweth everlastingly
Through the banks of time to the boundless sea,
Of love indwelling Eternity.

⁸ From *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*. Copyright 1915 by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

Praise to God in running water,
Gleaming, glancing, running water!
Crystal clear its joyous cheer,
Dreaming, dancing, running water;
Amber-bright, all slashed with white,
Sweet, romancing, running water;
Give God praise for all fair water!
His sweet grace is running water.

God's sweet grace is running water,
All fair sparkling, running water,—
Bubbling spring from rock or sod.
Goodly thing, the gift of God!
Babbling praises as it flows,
Gathering graces as it grows,
Scattering joys where'er it goes,—
Praise to God in running water!

—*John Oxenham*

THE CEREMONY OF THE BREAD

The minister shall take bread from the table, and, holding it in both hands, shall break it. He then reads,—

The Interpretation of Bread

One of the most primitive acts of hospitality is the sharing of bread. To break bread together, so that two or more men ate from the same loaf, being nourished by the same food, was a symbol of one common life which they shared.

The most familiar prayer, among Christian people, included the petition,—

Give us this day our daily bread,
and this prayer encircles the earth every day unceasingly.

The answer, too, comes unceasingly, for
Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower,
And the sun and the Father's will.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock*⁹

The Message of a Poet

Each meal should be a sacramental feast,—
A Eucharist each breaking of the bread,
Wherein we meet again our Great High Priest,
And pledge new troth to our exalted Head.

For all we eat doth come of Sacrifice,—
Life out of death,—since all we eat must yield
Life for our living,—and yet nothing dies
But in its giving finds its life fulfilled.

The wheat, the plant, the beast, and man all give
Each of his best, God's purpose to maintain,
And all subserve the end for which all live,
And pass,—to live more worthily again.

—*John Oxenham*

The following sentences and responses may be copied by the minister before the service and put into the hands of the members of the household, that they may give the responses appropriately, thus joining in the act of dedication of the house.

In the love of strength and of beauty, in confidence in good foundations and the strength of its timbers.

Response: We dedicate this house.

With a prayer that it be defended from fire and storm and earthquake and all manner of calamity.

Response: We dedicate this house.

⁹ Reprinted from *Thoughts for Everyday Living*, by Maltbie D. Babcock; copyright 1901 by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929 by Katherine T. Babcock; used by permission of the publishers.

With thanks to God for light which comes through our windows and for his beauty in trees and the sea and the mountains.

Response: We dedicate this house.

With joy in our door which opens to those who knock; with joy in friends who share our candle and our fire and who break bread with us.

Response: We dedicate this house.

To all the sweetness of home life and all the precious hopes of future happiness through God's unmeasured gift of the years.

Response: We dedicate this house.

A Prayer

God bless this house and all who enter herein. Bless thou this house in its deep foundations, even in the rocks abiding in unbroken darkness in the earth. Bless thou this house in its walls which stand in strength against storm and wind and all that walks in darkness. Bless thou this house in its sheltering roof and all its ample breadth, fit symbol of thy brooding care and thine everlasting arms around us, beneath us and above. Bless thou this house in all its chambers and all the well-loved things of daily life assembled within them. Bless thou this house in its light, its warmth, its cheer, its bread of hospitality, its cup for the thirsty, its gift of rest and of sleep for the weary. Bless thou this house which stands at the end of many journeys, fulfilling many hopes, ministering to many needs; this house of love and hope and friendship. Be thou, O Christ, a guest beside its fire and at its table, that from thee we may have light and that thou shalt break to us the bread of life eternal. And may the peace of God which passeth all understanding, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, abide in our hearts this day and evermore. Amen.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR HOME DEDICATION

A FIREPLACE

It seems to me a cozy fireplace
With glowing coals, or flames of light,
Was meant to be the lovers' hearthstone
Where vows of troth and faith they plight.

It seems to me a cozy fireplace
With radiant warmth and ruddy glow
Was meant to be a new home's symbol
Of love and faith and hope aglow.

A fireside lighting up the darkness,
Reflecting sunset's faded ray,
Becomes a sacred family altar
Where children sing and parents pray.

A fireplace for a lone old person
Whose lifelong love has slipped away
Becomes a shrine of sacred memories
Where one may dream at close of day.

—*Mary Stoner Wine*¹⁰

HYMN FOR A HOUSEHOLD

Lord Christ, beneath Thy starry dome
We light this flickering lamp of home,
And where bewildering shadows throng
Uplift our prayer and evensong.
Dost Thou, with heaven in Thy ken,
Seek still a dwelling-place with men,
Wandering the world in ceaseless quest?
O Man of Nazareth, be our guest!

Lord Christ, the bird his nest has found,
The fox is sheltered in his ground,

¹⁰ From *Patchwork and Rhythm*, copyright 1949 by the Brethren Publishing House.

But dost Thou still this dark earth tread
And have no place to lay Thy head?
Shepherd of mortals, here behold
A little flock, a wayside fold
That wait Thy presence to be blest—
O Man of Nazareth, be our guest!

—*Daniel Henderson*

YOUR HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

Take what God gives, O heart of mine,
And build your house of happiness.
Perchance some have been given more;
But many have been given less.
The treasure lying at your feet,
Whose value you but faintly guess,
Another builder, looking on,
Would barter heaven to possess.
Have you found work that you can do?
Is there a heart that loves you best?
Is there a spot somewhere called home
Where, spent and worn, your soul may rest?
A friendly tree? A book? A song?
A dog that loves your hand's caress?
A store of health to meet life's needs?
Oh, build your house of happiness!

Trust not tomorrow's dawn to bring
The dreamed-of joy for which you wait;
You have enough of pleasant things
To house your soul in goodly state;
Tomorrow Time's relentless stream
May bear what now you have away;
Take what God gives, O heart, and build
Your house of happiness today!

—*B. Y. Williams*

SONG

Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
For those that wander they know not where
Are full of trouble and full of care;

To stay at home is best.

Weary and homesick and distressed,
They wander east, they wander west,
And are baffled and beaten and blown about
By the winds of the wilderness of doubt;

To stay at home is best.

Then stay at home, my heart, and rest;
The bird is safest in its nest;
O'er all that flutter their wings and fly
A hawk is hovering in the sky;

To stay at home is best.

—Henry W. Longfellow

FUNDAMENTALS

“What makes a home?”

I asked my little boy,
And this is what he said,

“You, Mother,
And when Father comes,
Our table set all shiny,
And my bed,
And, Mother, I think it's home,
Because we love each other.”

You who are old and wise,
What would you say
If you were asked the question?
Tell me, pray.
And simply as a little child,
The old wise ones can answer nothing more.

A man, a woman, and a child,
Their love,
Warm as the gold hearth fire along the floor.
A table, and a lamp for light,
And smooth white beds at night.
Only the old, sweet fundamental things.
And long ago I learned—
Home may be near; home may be far,
But it is anywhere that love
And a few plain household treasures are.

—Anonymous

D. *The Sacramental Observance in Family Life*

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Occasional Rededication

The wedding day is a sacred memory and should be kept alive by the renewal of an occasional rededication. Increasingly there is need that some day be set aside in the church year, likely during Christian family week, when such a service can be conducted in the church for all couples. The altar of the church should be appropriately decorated with flowers and candles. There should be fitting music, the symbolic lighting of candles and a short but inspiring meditation by the pastor on the sacramental meaning of reaffirming the marriage vows. This may be a morning observance, a vesper, or an evening candlelight service. It should be a golden hour of offering lives to God and one another.

Prayer of Husband and Wife

O God, who out of all the world hast let us find one another and learn together the meaning of love, let us never fail to hold love precious. Let the flame of it never waver nor grow dim, but burn in our hearts as an unwavering devotion and shine through our eyes in gentleness and understanding on which no shadow falls. As the road of life we walk together lengthens, forbid that the dust of it should ever drift into our souls. Help us to have the sense to climb high places of memory and of imagination, so that we may remember the beauty that lies behind us and believe in the beauty that lies before. Make us sure that romance does not depend on time

or place, but that daily it may be renewed in the recognition of those larger possibilities in one another which love itself creates. Teach us to remember the little courtesies, to be swift to speak the grateful and the happy word, to believe rejoicingly in each other's best, and to face all life bravely because we face it with united hearts. So may whatever spot of earth thou givest us to dwell in be as a garden in which all sweet and lovely things may grow; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Russell Bowie*¹¹

A Ceremony of Marriage Rededication

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses to renew the vows taken by each of you and to celebrate the fact that you have been united in holy matrimony and have under God been living in this happy estate.

The daily life within a happy marriage is its own celebration, but the deepest and most abiding joys are made the richer by bringing them before God within the fellowship of the church, and there recommitting ourselves to the kind of life which makes such joys possible.

Each man and woman who is tonight renewing these vows has learned much since first they were taken. You have learned to give yourself without fear or reservation to your beloved. You have learned no longer to call things *mine* but *ours*. You have learned that there are times when your beloved needs especial sympathy and understanding because of heavy burdens carried alone. You have learned that no task, however menial, is worthless when done for the person you love. You have learned the joy of being as attractive as you can be for the one you love. You have learned that sorrow is not half as deep and that joys are more than doubled when shared. You have learned that beauty is more beautiful and love is lovelier when shared. You have learned that playing is more fun and work is less tiring

¹¹ From *Lift Up Your Hearts*, by Russell Bowie. Copyright 1942. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

when shared with your beloved. You have learned that the God who speaks in the silence of your own vigil with Him delights in revealing Himself even more fully in the joint vigils you two have kept with Him.

It is this relationship of mutual self-giving in love and loyalty to each other that tonight we come before our Father to celebrate and renew. If any of you has by thought or act broken faith within this relationship, let him now make silent confession to God and ask forgiveness so that He may give you what He desires for you.

John, will you continue to have this woman as your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you continue to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and, having forsaken all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both live?

(You may say, "I will.")

Mary, will you continue to have this man as your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you continue to love him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health; and having forsaken all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

(You may say, "I will.")

If it seems good to this fellowship that these men and women shall receive the blessing of the church and your prayers for them, you will say, "It seems good."

Each *John* will take his *Mary's* right hand and will say to her what I teach you. (Better look in her eyes!)

I, *John*, take thee, *Mary*, my beloved wife, to have and to hold, today and through all the tomorrows, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I renew to you my vow.

Release hands and now each *Mary* will take her *John* by the right hand and will say to him what I teach you. (He will know you mean it if you look in his eyes.)

I, *Mary*, take thee, *John*, my beloved husband, to have and to hold, today and through all the tomorrows, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I renew to you my vow.

Forasmuch as you have renewed your marriage vows before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged your faith, each to the other, and have declared the same by joining your right hands, we do lift you up in our united prayers as husband and wife. Whom God hath joined together let nothing put asunder. Let us pray.

Our gracious and loving Father, Thou hast taught us that if in all our ways we acknowledge Thee, Thou wilt direct our paths. We come, therefore, to ask Thy fatherly blessing upon these who have tonight renewed their vows of love and faithfulness. Even as two streams coming down the hillside unite their forces and run on together through the valleys, enriching them as they go, grant that these lives may be. In Thy providence Thou hast brought them together; grant that each may enrich the other's life and that together they may be a blessing to the world, their world through which they pass. In the midst of life's joys, keep them true to each other and loyal to Thee, their God. And if, perchance, trials and difficulties come, may they be but the means of binding them yet more closely together, together to work out life's problems, together to perform life's tasks. And so through all the coming days we commit them to Thee and Thy gracious care and keeping in a great companionship along life's road, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And may the peace of God that passes all understand-

ing stand sentinel at the gateway of your lives, keeping out all the things that hurt and annoy, and permitting to pass only the things that sweeten and enrich and beautify, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.¹²

Silver and Golden Wedding Anniversaries

In a day when so many homes are broken, it is significant that so many do withstand the strain and stress of life. These old homes are life's bulwarks against the enemies of the truest and best.

Homes, where love never grows old, where husbands grow into Christlikeness, and where wives remain kind and considerate to the end, deserve to be honored by the church. Husband and wife will honor each anniversary if their marriage has been a happy one. By the twenty-fifth anniversary, at least, neighbors and friends will be helped by a carefully planned home event.

When the years reach the half-century mark, and the couple merit it, the church may well honor the occasion. We do not recommend a regular wedding ceremony, but suggest six parts for a brief and impressive occasion.

1. The introduction to the service should be well-chosen words by the minister.

2. Following the heartfelt introductory words of the minister, a beautiful testimony from the husband, followed by one from the wife, would be an effective sermon to all. Many cannot express themselves effectively, or lack the courage to speak in public. In such case the minister may form a helpful statement after a heart-to-heart talk with the couple concerning the wonderful experience of their married life.

3. After this the minister may say:

This occasion tells us, Mr. (Brother), that you have greatly appreciated through the years the love, comradeship, faithfulness, and loyalty of this pure, true, and generous-hearted woman. Do you realize that such a companionship is a gift of God, and will you never cease to thank Him as the source of every good and perfect gift?

¹² Concluding prayer adapted from the *Cokesbury Marriage Manual*, by Leach, by permission of the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, publishers.

This occasion likewise proves that you, Mrs. (Sister), are grateful for the loyalty, devotion, and support of a pure, strong, sympathetic and manly husband. Do you realize that true manhood finds its example and ennobling power in the Man Christ Jesus, and will you ever thank your heavenly Father for this gift of Christian manhood?

4. Then the minister may place his hand on the clasped hands of the couple and offer a well-worded, well-thought-out, heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving and petition.

5. After the prayer the minister may offer a word of commendation and best wishes for the years ahead, realizing that the days may be few.

6. Special singers may then sing such songs as *Silver Threads Among the Gold*, *I Love You Truly*, or some old hymn that has blessed the family through the years, such as *Rock of Ages*.

Poems for Wedding Anniversaries

HOW DO I LOVE THEE?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs; and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breadth,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

—Elizabeth B. Browning

THIS GOLDEN SUMMIT

These are the middle years
And this is noon
And this the hill that I have climbed
Too soon.
Yet never once
On the steady upward way
Have I beheld
What I behold today.
Here from this golden summit
I can see
Beauty enough to take the breath from me.
Forward and backward
Distance so vast
The future's far horizon and the past
Blurred in a mist so blue
I cannot know
Which would have been the better way to go.
I look North, and South, and East, and West.
It looks the best.

—Grace Noll Crowell¹³

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all,
nor be afraid!"

—*From Rabbi ben Ezra, by Robert Browning*

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count for cost;
For one white singing hour of peace

¹³ Reprinted from Mrs. Crowell's book, *This Golden Summit*, by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been or could be.

—Sara Teasdale¹⁴

But of deep love is the desire to give
More than the living touch of warmth and fire,
More than shy comfort of the little flesh and hands;
It is the need to give
Down to the last dark kernel of the heart,
Down to the final gift of mind;
It is a need to give you that release which comes
Only of understanding, and to know
Trust without whimpering doubt and fear.

—Josephine Johnson

TO MY WIFE

Together we climbed the steep of life. We were ever together in grief and joy. We sauntered hand-in-hand through the flower-filled gardens of spring. We drowsed together by the fireside in winter. United we journey towards the invisible.

You mingled your being with mine, in the years and in our children. You had one voice, one body, one look. Now you have become many. Now your life blooms in every one of our children. In each of them you recover your youth and proffer me your enchantments.

We have reached the crest and we go down the other side. That strange thing, separation, will one day come. With sighs one of us will call to the other. Let the one who stays a few more days on earth remember that death is an illusion of the senses.

—Constancio Vigil¹⁵

¹⁴ From "Barber," *Collected Poems*, by Sara Teasdale, copyright 1917. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

¹⁵ Reprinted from Vigil's *The Fallow Land* by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

A PHYSICAL BIRTHDAY

(The day you were born into this world)

Let each birthday be an occasion for the sacrament of gratitude, joy, and anticipated good. Let these days be altar days when life is again offered up to God. The family in council may wish to arrange a ritual of prayer, significant readings, and hymns for the occasion. It can be a celebration around the table or the fireplace, or at an altar set up in the living room with suitable symbolism—a burning candle or candles, a picture that inspires the heart to look Godward.

A SPIRITUAL BIRTHDAY

(The day you were born into God's Kingdom)

What a precious time to remember, relive, and re-evaluate! When that day returns how needful and opportune that one appraise his spiritual state and reconceive the meaning of dedication to God through Jesus Christ. That day affords a chance to rekindle the flame of faith in sincere worship. On that day, the member may seek out his minister, and, after a period of counsel and guidance concerning his spiritual condition, need, and aspiration, go into the church for a brief but significant act of rededication. Appropriate music may be used. There may also be fitting lighting of the altar candles. Then the minister will direct the member in his offering of life up to God afresh, by Scripture readings, prose readings, and prayers, with a period of silence following each one. These readings should be in keeping with the felt needs and aspirations of the individual as discovered in the counseling session. The act of dedication may be consummated in kneeling before the altar and in prayer. The minister may conclude the prayer in a benediction with his hand upon the head of the penitent. For this sacramental act of reconsecration a member of the deacon board or a friend may be present. One preparatory experience that would add meaning to the occasion would be for the person to revisit the place where the original surrender to God was made and symbolized. If this is not physically possible, it can be a return by way of the imagination.

This life must become sacramental—a daily offering of life and experience to God. And the more sacramental acts we add to life the more the spirit of worship will pervade and rule life.

READINGS FOR BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARIES

A dream that leads to an untried path
Where unknown tempests blow,
And the only chart a man can boast
Is the will that bids him go.

And then, my soul, bethink yourself,
For God has spread this scroll
To test the stuff of your rough-hewn faith
And the fiber of your soul.

From The Lure of the Unattained, by Percy R. Hayward¹⁶

MOMENTS

We live in moments—shining moments only,
That prick the drab fabric of our existence
As stars pierce the night.
Moments of beauty and high adventure;
Moments when we glimpse life's meaning—
An endless quest, a making of new goals,
Never an arriving.
Moments of love and understanding,
Courage, honor, dedication,
Kindness and generosity.
Moments when we can shout for joys of mere living.
Moments of satisfaction in life's common
experiences—
In the family, in friendship, in work,
In the enjoyments of art and the out-of-doors;
Thank God for our radiant moments!

—Charlotte C. Kinney¹⁷

¹⁶ Reprinted by permission of the *International Journal of Religious Education*.

¹⁷ Reprinted by permission of the *Christian Advocate*.

WE ARE THE LIGHT

O Light serene and still!
Come and our spirits fill,
Bring in the day:
Guide of our feeble sight,
Star of our darkest night,
Shine on the path of right,
Show us the way!

—*King Robert of France*

As one who in the valley may abide
Goes to the hilltop for a rarer air,
So on the heights may I with Thee abide,
See far horizons, heavens more broad and fair;
And finding life in richer plenitude,
Nor shackled by the cares from which I flee,
May fill each moment with the sense of good
Which comes, O Lord, from knowing more of Thee.

—*Anonymous*

A PRAYER

Dear God, the light is come, our outgrown creeds
Drop from us as a garment, and our sight
Grows clear to see ourselves and Thee aright;
We trust Thy love to meet our utmost needs
And know Thy hand sustains us. The foul breeds
Of nameless doubts and fears that thronged the night
Like phantoms disappear in Truth's clear light;
Self only, now our upward way impedes:
For Thou hast given new bottles for Truth's wine:
Hast given a larger faith to help us live
A larger life; new knowledge that will give
A lamp to lead us on to the divine:
And though our feet may falter in the way,
Yet shall our eyes behold Love's Perfect Day!

—*Anonymous*

THREE THINGS

Three things I beg of Life to let me keep:
Rare strength, which through dark storm will
safely last—

Until my soul's dire need of it is past—
Because its main pilasters reach so deep;
Initiative, with eager, circling sweep
Of wings . . . high courage, of the keen enthusiast
Who even in his dreams can hear the blast
Of trumpet calls that urge him up the steep.
Real strength endures . . . initiative impels,
And flaming courage molds a dauntless heart.
Dynamic power these give—and self-release.
With them, the world's great inner citadels
Are mine . . . gay plumed adventure they impart
To Life—while traveling toward the Sunset Peace.

—*Gertrude B. Gunderson*

SUNDOWN

The summer sun is sinking low;
Only the tree-tops redden and glow:
Only the weathercock on the spire
Of the neighboring church is a flame of fire;
All is in shadow below.

O beautiful, awful summer day,
What hast thou given, what taken away?
Life and death, and love and hate,
Homes made happy or desolate,
Hearts made sad or gay!

On the road of life one mile-stone more!
In the book of life one leaf turned o'er!
Like a red seal is the setting sun
On the good and the evil men have done.—
Naught can to-day restore!

—*Henry W. Longfellow*

E. *The Breaking of Bread*

Every meal in the family needs to become a holy time when life communes with the Giver of Life and of the Means of Life. To deepen the meaning of the sacramental character of the meal we suggest the occasional use of the Jewish Sabbath evening service, "The Kiddush," which was likely the basis of the last-supper symbolism used by our Lord on that night when He was betrayed. (See *Union Home Prayer Book*, pages 345-348.)

The poem by John Oxenham on page 33 might well be read in connection with this ceremony.

F. *The Common Toil*

Unless worship terminates in work that can be offered up to God, we do not worship. And until the common toil becomes an expression of one's love for God, we cannot really worship. The language of the work life fixes the nature of one's worship. Only work through which the healing, redeeming grace of God can operate in the world can be considered sacramental, an offering unto God. The common toil of family life and home management must become sacramental, a means whereby the energies of body, mind, and spirit are ever anew offered up to God and to the building of the Kingdom of God, of life, and of love. For God is not only to be found in things temporal, earthly; He is to be glorified, adored, revered, in the doing of things temporal and earthly. All parts of daily life are to be brought into relationship with Him. The ploughing of a field is to be the continuation of prayer in the church; the making of the bread and the breaking of the bread in the family fellowship are to be the extension of the Holy Communion in the church; the toil at anvil, desk, and machine is to be the continuation of that labor of mind and spirit at the altar of God. Not only does the whole of life convey God to those who have disciplined their faculties to discern Him, but trained faculties are to be channels through which God communicates His message and redeeming power to the world. Let the family review together periodically the meaning of their toil, and so make their work give direction to their prayer life, and their prayer life contribute to the content of their work life. Let the service in the church on Labor Day Sunday interpret sacramentally the common toil. It would be especially helpful to conduct a service each quarter on the dedication of labor to God.

WORSHIP

Work is devout, and service is divine.
Who stoops to scrub a floor
May worship more
Than he who kneels before a holy shrine;
Who crushes stubborn ore
More worthily adore
Than he who crushes sacramental wine.

—Roy Campbell MacFie

II. SERVICES OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

A. *A Service of Penitence and Forgiveness*

Much of the havoc in human personality is the result of a sense of guilt. Creative Christianity must devise new symbolism constantly to bring to bear upon tortured, burdened, broken souls the healing, cleansing, forgiving grace of God. By fitting symbolism God reaches the guilt levels of life and sets the soul free from its bond, and the joy of forgiveness floods through the depths of personality. It is very difficult for some persons to tell even to a minister whom they respect and trust the deep secrets of the heart that are tearing them apart, undercutting their peace of mind and spirit. It is to help such harassed souls that this service is suggested. When after a series of counseling sessions the minister feels that the depths of need are not being reached, let him suggest that it would be well to write out the whole story, omitting nothing. This is to be brought to the next counseling period. Receiving the paper the minister will say:

Before God this is a full and complete statement of your problem. You have left nothing unwritten that would prevent God's blessing you with peace. Do you feel that this statement clears the way for God to act in your life?

If the person replies yes, then invite him to a worship center that has previously been arranged: a suitable table with a beautiful white covering over it; one white candle and to the side a brass laver or bowl; above the table a picture of Christ. Coming before the worship center the minister shall say:

You have penitently laid bare your heart in this word of testimony and confession which I hold in my hand. Kneel at this worship center and hear the words of our Lord to the penitent and broken, to those hungry for a new life.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. With the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

As the penitent remains in the kneeling posture, the minister shall say:

Do you now with this written confession seek new fellowship with God? And do you desire with all your heart the grace of a new beginning with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Then shall the penitent say:

I do. I want to be done with this sin, evil, and wilfulness against God.

Then the minister shall say:

Let us pray: O God of mercy and healing forgiveness, Thou who dost kindle desire in human life to find rest and peace in Thee, Thou hast brought this one to the altar of a new beginning. Release him from the burden of tortured conscience. Let the dove of peace descend upon him. Let Thy heavenly light dispel all darkness of mind, and enable him to rise and walk in newness of life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the minister speak to the kneeling penitent:

As a sign of the work of God in your heart, light this confession of yours in this candle flame. As it is consumed

by the flame in this laver, even so is God taking away your sin. As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed your transgression from you. So that henceforth you are free from your infirmity, your sin is pardoned, your tension of mind is relieved, and the peace of God that passes understanding will confirm this work of God in your heart.

And now with his hand upon the head of the penitent the minister shall say:

My brother (my sister), go and sin no more, and the presence of God will be with you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

B. A Service of Praise at the Birth of a Child

The pastoral ministry to the new mother at home or at the hospital is to be one of joy and gratitude to God. The minister may take with him a candleholder and a white unburned candle. After the initial greeting let him direct the attention Godward. He may say:

Since God in His goodness has put into your hands a new life through whom He would bless, enrich, and renew the world, and since God has attended you and preserved you in the birth of this child, it is fitting that we adore God and give Him thanks for His bountiful mercy, wisdom, and love. Let the words of this scripture become the spirit of your gratitude to God.

The minister may then read Psalm 116 or a part of the Song of Mary in Luke 1:46-50.

Then let the minister say:

Every child coming into the world represents a new hope in the heart of God, and the promise that His light

may shine more luminously in the world. (Therefore, in token of this meaning we light this candle, symbol of the divine hope and ours, for this precious life sent from heaven.) In the joy of knowing that a marvelous plan of God is wrapped up in the bundle of this little life, let us lift our hearts to God in prayer:

Then may one of the following be used, or one of the minister's own composing.

O Lord, in whose hands are the issues of life, we thank Thee for the life now given, and for the life preserved. And as Thou hast knit together life and love in one fellowship, so we pray Thee to grant that with this fresh gift of life to us, there may be given an increase of love one to another. Grant that the presence of weakness may awaken our tenderness; enable us to minister to the little one in all lovingkindness, wisdom, and fidelity; and grant that he may live as Thy child, and may serve this generation according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*W. B. Carpenter*

Our Father God, who didst reveal Thyself in the home and the life of a little child, to Thy altar of love we bring ourselves and our (child) children, bowing together and lifting up our hearts in prayer and song, praising Thy holy name. Bless all little children, we humbly pray; give them health of body, purity of mind, and joy in work and play. Help us so to live that the little (one) ones entrusted to us may trust Thee, and walk in Thy ways. By Thy gentleness make us gentle one to another. . . . Reveal Thyself to us anew as a little child in our hearts, and let us trust that heart with Thee; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Joseph Fort Newton*¹⁸

¹⁸ Reprinted from *Altar Stairs*, copyright 1928, by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

This prayer may be prayed by the parents, repeating after the minister:

Author and Giver of life, who hast entrusted to our hands this precious child, we thank Thee for the mystery, wonder, and glory of life. We praise Thee that Thou hast chosen us to be parents of this child. Make us ever worthy of this trust from Thee, and enable us so to guide his life that he may daily increase in wisdom and stature, and grow in Thy love and service, until he come to Thy eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Following the prayer, the minister shall put out the flame of the candle, saying:

This light shall be kept burning in our hearts now, to direct us in helping God realize His plan in this child.

Then shall follow the benediction:

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

C. Sacrament of Dedicating Children to God

We recommend that churches that hold services for the consecration of children also emphasize the idea of the consecration of parents as well as the consecration of the congregation to the interests of its childhood. These services should be held at regular intervals, perhaps twice each year. We think that Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Mother's Day, or Children's Day, would be appropriate occasions. They should be planned with great care. They should be simple, brief, and beautiful. They can best be held in connection with the regular church service, preferably being substituted for the opening worship program. All the details should be explained to the parents in advance. The service should open with the usual prelude or hymn. As this is concluded the pastor should come into the

church followed by the parents with their children. As they enter, the pastor may read or quote from memory appropriate verses of Scripture. He should speak slowly but clearly and tenderly. The pastor's word to the parents should be brief, but with clear intimation of their responsibility. There should follow the declaration by the parents, a brief charge by the pastor, a prayer of consecration, and, as the parents file out or go to their seats, there may be an appropriate hymn by the congregation or choir, special music, or an organ postlude. Soft music could appropriately accompany the entire service. After the music, the minister will enter the pulpit and make an announcement such as this to the congregation:

We have just witnessed the consecration of
....., son of Brother and Sister A certificate of consecration will be issued to these parents as a memorial of this service. May God bless this child and make him a blessing.

Since the ministry of consecrating children to God will usually be carried out as a part of a regular service of worship, the following aids are of such character that they can easily be fitted into the order of worship.

A SERVICE OF DEDICATION

PRELUDE AND PROCESSIONAL

While soft music is being played, the parents with their child will come forward to the designated place.

INVOCATION

SCRIPTURE

He was called Jesus. And they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever

does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

These parents desiring to train this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord are here before His presence to present unto Him their little one. They recognize their need of wisdom and divine help and are come hither to the house of the Lord to ask our prayers.

CONSECRATION CHARGE

The parents will stand with the child while the charge is being given.

Minister: God has entrusted this precious child into your care. It is as plastic clay in your hands to be shaped into a fit vessel for His service. Do you now present this child before God in solemn consecration?

Parents: We do.

Minister: Do you consecrate yourselves as parents to the task of rearing your child in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord"?

Parents: We do.

Minister: Do you promise to instruct this little one in the Christian way of life, and, to the best of your ability, provide a home atmosphere of devotion and prayer, and by your personal example lead it finally through confession and baptism into the fellowship of the church?

Parents: We do.

Minister (placing his hand on the child and calling him by his first name):, I consecrate you to the Lord, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Since you have solemnly promised before God and these people to rear this child for the service of Christ and

to consecrate yourselves to this sacred task, I therefore charge you to be faithful to these solemn vows which you have made and to engage all help of home, family, and church to the end that God's will may be done in this tender life. May the blessing of God rest upon you. As we pray, will the congregation stand in consecration of itself to the spiritual welfare of this child.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Oh, Thou Master of us all, we pray Thee to bless this little one as Thou didst bless little children during Thy earthly ministry. Grant Thy grace unto these parents that they may discharge faithfully the duties of home and family life, feeding the lambs of Thy fold with spiritual food. Holy Father, consecrate them unto the truth, the way, and the life as revealed in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (parents joining)

THE MIZPAH

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

POSTLUDE AND RECESSIONAL

A PRAYER

Almighty Father, we bless Thee for the children Thou hast given us, and for all the joys they have brought us. We would consecrate them anew to Thy service; we would train them in knowledge and love of Thy commands. Reveal to them the glory and beauty of life. Enable them to rise to their supreme opportunities; to cast aside all frivolity and carelessness; and to make ready body and mind for the work that awaits them. Inspire them with a spirit of truth and courage and self-control. Write the law of kindness in their hearts, that they may hate all cruelty and love all goodness and mercy with perfect love. As they grow in age, may they grow in grace; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Samuel McComb*

D. *Ministry to the Sick*

THE ANOINTING SERVICE

The anointing for healing in the name of the Lord is a neglected doctrine. While physicians, with nurses and friends, do much to relieve and assist those suffering with physical ailments, only God can heal. The afflicted Christian can do nothing better than to trust in His power for healing. The anointing should foster this attitude.

In the Old Testament, anointing with oil was observed as an act of consecration (Exodus 40:9-11). Officials of both state and church were inducted into office with an anointing service (Exodus 40:15; 1 Samuel 16:12-13). The laying on of hands symbolized, in the New Testament, the bestowment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

These symbols, though ancient, were used by Jesus and His apostles along with the prayer of faith at the occasion of the anointing of the sick. Since only God heals, a symbolic service which emphasizes this fact should be appreciated by the sick and should be encouraged by the ministers. The only worthy desire to live is that one may continue to love and serve God and man. The anointing service should aim at consecration to the unfinished task. The Church of the Brethren values Matthew 4:23, Mark 6:5, 7-13, and James 5:13-18, and anoints the sick, having faith, for the healing of their bodies and for spiritual growth and inspiration.

Increasingly it is being recognized that there is a relationship between bodily illness and spiritual maladjustment. It is known that we pass on to our bodies the illnesses of our souls, and that recovery in many cases depends upon the recovery and renewal of a right relationship with God and man. Hence the utter necessity of a preparatory service that will clear the channels of mind, emotion, and will of the impediments of anger, hate, resentment, guilt, the unforgiving spirit, pride, or greed. Let the administrators of this sacrament of healing prepare their own spirits in penitence, self-searching, and prayer, so that God's healing light may get through them to the person in need, enabling him to clear out of his life everything that blocks the processes of divine healing. Moreover, let us help our people to realize that the anointing is not a last rite of the church upon those about to leave this world, but a ministry of the church to those who need healing of body, mind, and spirit.

Let the whole service direct the mind Godward to the infinite resources of His grace. Everything in word, prayer, and Scripture should build confidence, assurance, and joyful expectancy.

*First Anointing Service*¹⁹

1. Preparation of the one to be anointed
 - a. By Scripture and prayer
 - b. By giving the privilege of confession of sin and the rededication of life
2. The act of anointing
 - a. Placing a few drops of oil on the head of the individual for:
The increase of faith
The forgiveness of sin
The restoration to health
 - b. Placing the hands of the elders on the head of the sick; and prayer for consecration and recovery
3. The benediction of praise
 - a. An appropriate hymn (sung softly)
 - b. A benediction of hope

Second Anointing Service

1. Brief remarks
2. A hymn (if conditions are favorable) such as *Jesus, Lover of My Soul, Rock of Ages*, or *Nearer, My God, to Thee*
3. Scriptures — your own selection or the following: Mark 6: 7, 12-13; Acts 5: 12, 15-16; Mark 16: 17-18; James 5: 14-16
4. Examining the patient

In order to make sure of the applicant's preparation of heart to receive the great blessing of this service, the minister should inquire into his (her) spiritual condition (Acts 14: 9).

Dear brother (sister), you have heard something of what the Word teaches concerning the healing power of God, through the Holy Spirit. So far as you know, are you at peace with your God, or is there anything which might prevent you from receiving the great blessing in store for you? Are you ready now to commit your case absolutely into the hands of the Lord as the Great Physician of the body, as well as of the soul?

All may join in a season of prayer for the true preparation of heart to enter most fully into the service.

¹⁹ Prepared by J. W. Lear.

Third Anointing Service

In 1860 the Annual Meeting suggested the following procedure:

Then the sick member is raised to a sitting posture, and the elder brother reacheth forth his hand, and the other brother pours oil upon it, which he, the first, puts upon the head of the sick, and thus three times, saying the words of the apostle, "Thou art anointed 'in the name of the Lord,' unto the strengthening of thy faith, unto the comforting of thy conscience, and unto a full assurance of the remission of thy sins," or as the Lord may give utterance.

Fourth Anointing Service

Following the prayer, the elder who leads the service, taking the vial of oil in his hand, pours out a portion of it on the head of the sick, saying as he does so:

Beloved brother (sister), upon this declaration of your consecration to God and of your commitment of all your bodily and spiritual ills to Christ as the Great Physician, you are anointed in the name of the Lord, for the healing of all your bodily diseases, and for the forgiveness of all your sins.

Then the elders lay their hands upon the patient's head, as in an ordination service, and each elder prays, as led by the Spirit, definitely committing the patient's condition to Jesus Christ our Lord, for Him to be the Physician in charge of the case.

Following the ceremony, the company may unite in singing some appropriate hymn.

SCRIPTURES FOR THE SICKROOM

Scriptures of a general nature: Matthew 11:28; John 3:16-21; John 14:27; Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 1 John 3:1-3; Revelation 3:20

Scriptures of confidence: Psalm 23; Psalm 27:1-6; Psalm 27:7-14; Psalm 42; Psalm 103:1-5; Romans 11:33-36

Scriptures of courage: Psalm 116; Psalm 121; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 43:1-3; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 4:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 6:10-18; Hebrews 4:14-16

Scriptures of comfort: Psalm 43; Psalm 46; Psalm 105:1-5; Psalm 130; Psalm 142; Isaiah 26:3-4; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 43:1-3, 5a

Scriptures of hope: John 10:1-11; John 14:1-6; 15-18; 26-27;
Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-19; 2
Timothy 4:6-8

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Almighty God, who art the only source of health and healing, the spirit of calm and the central peace of the universe, grant to us, Thy children, such a consciousness of Thy indwelling presence as may give us utter confidence in Thee. In all pain and weariness and anxiety may we throw ourselves upon Thy besetting care, that knowing ourselves fenced about by Thy loving omnipotence, we may permit Thee to give us health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—C. M. Addison

A PRAYER FOR HEALTH

God of hope, God of confidence,
God of the living, of joy, and of triumph;
Thou who art Creator, Master, and Lord,
Thou who art within us, beneath us, beyond us:
We believe; help thou our unbelief.

There are forces within us that pile up to endanger
our health and prevent our recovery,
Fears that lay hold upon us and block the health within us:
We are afraid of the work before us, of the people around
us, of life itself.
We do not trust those who love us, nor those who care
for us, nor ourselves.
We are consumed with bitterness, resentment, jealousy,
hatred; O God, forgive us.
We repent of the times we have given ourselves over to
those powers of destruction, and we pray for quietness
of mind and poise of soul.

Like a sea that is calm, like clouds in a windless sky, like a child asleep in its crib, so wilt thou quiet our spirits through love and affection, that we may believe.

Give us a desire to have faith; release us from doubts that have claimed us; and lift our eyes to the far horizon.

Release within us a willingness to be made whole, and bless all who serve thee through healing ministries;

Give them wisdom, skill, and a devotion to the task of healing.

We pray in the name of that One who desired health for all, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—*Russell L. Dicks*²⁰

A PRAYER TO ACCEPT LIFE

O Thou Creator and Sustainer of the universe,
Thou who art the Light and Love and Spirit of the world
itself,

We seek to free our souls.

We give over the haughtiness of spirit that claims us,
And we repent of the practice of self-glorification.

We pray for a spirit of humility,
As we join with thee in creative labor.

We lift our eyes to the far horizon, and we feel thy life
within us.

O God, grant us the mind and spirit to accept the tasks and
the heritage to which thou hast called us;

And may we know that there are things, situations, and
conditions that are beyond our control.

Spirit of God, flow through us and make us thine own.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—*Russell L. Dicks*²¹

²⁰ From *My Faith Looks Up*, by Russell L. Dicks. Westminster Press, 1949.
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²¹ *Ibid.*

O Lord God, our Creator, by Thy will we came into being, and at Thy command, when the right hour is come, we shall one day leave this world. Thou alone knowest the holiness to which we might have attained, if from earliest days we had always claimed the privilege of sonship. But, O Lord, we have not done so. We have not lived in the strength of Thy grace. Form us into Thine image more and more in the years that we have still to live. Mould us by Thine almighty power. Burn out of us all that is sinful and corrupt. As the grass and the flowers grow by the warmth of Thy sun and the showers of Thy rain, so let Thy spirit work in our souls a holy growth that we may become well-pleasing in Thy sight. Every day may we increase in self-forgetfulness, in simplicity, in courage and in trust, and thus shall we every day approach nearer to Thy likeness. Make us, O God, true branches of Thee, the living Vine and to Thee be all the glory. Amen.

—*F. B. Cobbe*

O God, merciful and mighty Giver of life and Fountain of health, heal the hurts of our hearts and the ills of our bodies by the power of Thy cleansing and renewing grace. If we have been ignorant or careless of Thy laws of health, if we have allowed our spirits to become a prey to worry, fear or despair, if we have forgotten Thee, our Divine Physician, grant us Thy forgiveness, and help us to find in Thy loving power our health of body and our joy of soul; in the name of Him who bore our infirmities and triumphed over all our ills, even Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

—*Joseph Fort Newton*²²

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, God of love, Author of life, in whom we live and move and have our being, do Thou stay our minds on Thee in hours of sickness

²² From *Altar Stairs*, by Joseph Fort Newton. Copyright 1928. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

and when we are beset by fears. Let us be still and know that Thou art God. Quiet the multitude of our thoughts within us. Take from us all fret and care. Give us repose of spirit. Good Shepherd, make us to lie down in green pastures. Lead us beside still waters, and restore our souls.

Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, we pray that Thou wilt suffuse our inner being with Thy light; steal through all our frame; fill mind and heart and every tissue of our body with Thy radiance; dispel all darkness and disease from our innermost parts. Restore to their perfect work the ordered functions of nature. Even while we know it not, as we rest in sleep, or as we go about our work, do Thou complete the healing and renewing processes which shall make us whole.

Teach us day by day, that as we wait upon the Lord we shall renew our strength; we shall mount up with wings as eagles; we shall run and not be weary; we shall walk and not faint. Amen.

—James Myers²³

O blessed Redeemer, relieve, we beseech Thee, by Thy indwelling power, the distress of this Thy servant; release him from sin, and drive away all pain of soul and body, that being restored to soundness of health, he may offer Thee praise and thanksgiving; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

E. *Ministry to the Dying*

Coming into the room where the sick person is, the minister may say:

Peace be unto you, from God our Father, from our Lord Jesus Christ, and assurance be yours in the companioning presence of the Holy Spirit.

²³ From *Prayers, Personal and Social*, by James Myers. Used by permission of the National Council of Churches.

Then shall the minister read or quote from memory portions from the Scriptures: Psalm 25; Psalm 27; Psalm 43; Psalm 46; John 14; 1 Corinthians 15:11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Revelation 21; Revelation 22.

Then shall a prayer be spoken:

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons; We humbly commend the soul of this thy servant, our dear brother, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour; beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight. Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted, through the lusts of the flesh or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee; through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord. Amen.

—*Book of Common Prayer*²⁴

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered; Make us, we beseech Thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let Thy Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness, all our days: that, when we shall have served Thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Church of Jesus Christ; in the confidence of a living faith; in the comfort of a reasonable and sustaining hope; in favor with Thee our God, and in perfect charity with the world. All which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Adapted from Holy Dying, by Jeremy Taylor*²⁵

²⁴ Reprinted by permission of Dr. John Suter, the custodian of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

O God our Father, only Thy infinite pity is equal to the infinite pathos of human life. Friend after friend departs, following a forlorn march of dust, leaving us to walk alone. O God, our hope is in Thee; be Thou with us as our path dips down into the Valley of Shadow, that we may fear no evil. At eventide let there be a bridge of sunset into the eternal day. Lord, leave us not to mere thought dreams; give us Thyself in our hearts, Thy life in our life. Show us that the death of our Lord made him the Lord of death; and as we cherish in our hearts the image of these we love, so Thou dost keep us in Thy great Father-heart. Hear our cry, O God, and make life deeper, richer, and more radiant, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Joseph F. Newton*²⁶

After the departure of the soul from the body, a benedictory prayer may be given.

Into Thy hands, O merciful Saviour, we commend the soul of Thy servant, now departed from the body. Receive him into the arms of Thy mercy, into the blessed rest of Thine everlasting peace, and into the glorious fellowship of the saints in light. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you until that glad day when the family of earth becomes one with the family in heaven. Amen.

F. *The Pastor Guiding Spiritual Growth*

The level of spiritual life must be raised. The spiritual vitality of Christians must be heightened. The church suffers from sin—sin in the life of the average member. The church is suffering from worldliness, the secular spirit, materialism, and a score of other illnesses of the soul. How many souls are crippled because of spiritual immaturities, of arrested spiritual development, of unresolved spiritual conflict, of doctrinal ignorance! The pastor is a

²⁶ From *Altar Stairs*, by Joseph Fort Newton. Copyright 1928. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

director of souls whose first business is to do souls good, help them to be better than they are, to be more than they are, to enter into the glorious freedom and fulfillment of the divine intention for their lives. This means that each person must be dealt with separately. Spiritual life means supernaturalizing the common life, making everything an act of devotion to God, making everything a service of His will. People must be helped to bring all of life into obedience to the mind of Christ. So, the biggest task of the director of souls is to assist persons to live consciously, moment by moment, in the presence of God. This calls for great devotion, infinite patience, and insight on the part of the director. He must be one in whom there is a daily dying to self and a rising to walk with God in newness and greater fullness of life. His own life must be well regulated and disciplined unto God before he can help others into a more abundant life.

First, persons need to be helped to interpret their own lives—where they are spiritually; what is hindering a joyful life in God; what they need to outgrow; what they need to give up or take on; how to handle temptations, worries, anxieties, frustrations, sufferings, sorrow; what to do with distractions in prayer; what the arid stretches of spiritual experience mean. They need help to trace the hand of God in their own lives, and to discern what impulses and urges are God-incited; they need direction in order to find and experience God in a worship service; they need to learn how to handle creatively and constructively the tensions of family and community life.

Second, persons need to know what to read that will inform their minds and kindle their hearts in the love of God. They need guidance to read the Bible in such a way that it can speak to their condition. They need to be guided to read what will especially meet the need of the soul. Each soul is unique and is on a different level of growth—and has particular hindrances to the grace of God in his own life. To enable them to lay hold of the means whereby their lives are amended, above all the pastor will assist each soul to become conscious of the Holy Spirit, the helper, fortifier, enlightener, and interpreter of the state of the heart.

This means that the individual must be guided to live according to a creative pattern of spiritual discipline and devotion, that he may attain to the degree of holiness to which his Creator has called him. This calls for great serenity, patience, and gentleness in the pastor. For this spiritual maturing, then, we suggest four means: First: regular meditation by which our souls are enkindled to advance in

the life with God; by this practice the human heart stays pliable and mouldable to the touch of God. Second: to renew constantly the resolves to go forward to the perfection of Christ. Third: never to dwell on past spiritual victories or attainment, but to set our minds on the unwon virtues. Fourth: to think often of how we sin against the grace of God by insensitiveness and wilfulness—and to live in the agony of a continual penitence.

G. The Pastor's Personal Discipline

The Choice is always ours. Then let me choose
The longest art, the hard Promethean way
Cherishingly to tend and feed and fan
That inward fire, whose small precarious flame,
Kindled or quenched, creates
The noble or the ignoble men we are,
The worlds we live in and the very fates,
Our bright or muddy star.

—Aldous Huxley

When the spiritual disciplines go out of human life, man in his confusion and social chaos tries to recover sanity and order in his living by coercive disciplines, such as military training, regimented life, or controlled economy. But those do not bring health to the human spirit or to a disordered community life. The controls that yield order are inward, and must be taken on voluntarily. This makes a spiritual rule of life a necessity in the life of the minister and his people. This pattern of spiritual disciplines must ever be subject to creative change and improvement. As God gets control of the inner springs of action in life the outer life becomes balanced, ordered, and sane.

A SUGGESTIVE DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00

Rising

7:20-7:45

Prayer—the adoring of God—the committing of one's life and day to the keeping and direction of God. The systematic reading of the Scriptures, with meditation on the word, sentence, paragraph, or chapter that especially speaks to one's heart. The keeping of a notebook journal of these impressions and insights given to us by the Holy Spirit.

7:45-8:00	Breakfast
8:00-10:30	Study—sermon preparation, the arrangement of worship services
10:30-11:30	Selected basic reading in theology, psychology, science, sociology, poetry, fiction, etc.
11:30-12:00	Manual work
12:00	Dinner
12:45-1:30	Prayer—intercession for people of the parish, and others
1:30-5:00	Pastoral calling and office appointments
5:00-6:00	The writing of prayers and litanies—with devotional reading
6:00	Dinner
7:00-7:30	Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, petition
7:30-10:00	Parish meetings, appointments, etc.
10:00-10:55	Posting of records—prayer, confession, commitment

Every rule must have an element of tentativeness in it, so that it is subject to revision as occasion may require. *But the important matter is to have a rule of spiritual discipline.* And the very essence of this rule must be adoration of God—the rejoicing in what God is, what God does, what God is doing, what God will do. By adoration the horizons of one's faith are extended immeasurably, and one's vision of God is enlarged. This is the certain fruit of dwelling lovingly on God's attributes. Thus life is purged of its pettiness, anger, lusts, fear, cheap and little talk, its lovelessness. The following litany of adoration illustrates how our littleness is lost in the greatness of God.

LITANY OF ADORATION

- O God, in Thy Perfect Beauty, I adore Thee.
 In the beauty of holiness; I adore Thee.
 In Thy infinite wisdom; I adore Thee.
 In Thy boundless power; I adore Thee.
 In Thy tender mercy and compassion; I adore Thee.
 In Thy unquenchable love; I adore Thee.
- O God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth; I adore Thee.
 Giver of every good and perfect gift; I adore Thee.
 Lord and King of heaven and earth; I adore Thee.
 Most righteous and merciful judge; I adore Thee.
 The glory of all the universe; I adore Thee.
 Almighty and Everlasting Father; I adore Thee.
 Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world; I adore Thee.

Holy Spirit, dwelling in my heart; I adore Thee.
O God, I adore Thee on Thy Throne in Glory;
I adore Thee in the most holy sacrament;
I adore Thee in Thy church established on earth;
I adore Thee in Thy kingdom on earth;
I adore Thee in the beauty of all nature;
I adore Thee ever present with me;
I adore Thee in the lives of friends and strangers;
I adore Thee kindling in me the desire to pray;
Come, Holy Spirit, and kindle my heart and fill it with the fire of
Thy love.

—Constance Garrett²⁷

Let each phrase kindle the imagination until the heart is
warmed with the sense of divine love.

A PRAYER OF SELF-EXAMINATION

O God, who hast proven Thy love for mankind by sending us
Jesus Christ our Lord, and hast illumined our human life by the
radiance of His presence, I give Thee thanks for this Thy greatest gift.

For my Lord's days upon earth!

For the record of His deeds of love!

For the words He spoke for my guidance and help!

For His obedience unto death!

For His triumph over death!

For the presence of His Spirit with me now; I thank Thee, O
God.

Grant that the remembrance of the blessed life that once was
lived out on this common earth under these ordinary skies may
remain with me in all the tasks and duties of this day. Let me
remember:

His eagerness, not to be ministered unto, but to minister;

His sympathy with suffering of every kind:

His bravery in face of His own suffering:

His meekness of bearing, so that, when reviled, He reviled not
again:

His steadiness of purpose in keeping to His appointed task:

His simplicity:

His serenity of spirit:

His complete reliance upon Thee, His Father in Heaven:

²⁷ From *Growth in Prayer*, by Constance Garrett. Copyright 1950. Used by
permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

And in each of these ways give me grace to follow in His footsteps.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I commit all my ways unto Thee. I make over my soul to Thy keeping. I pledge my life to Thy service. May this day be for me a day of obedience and of charity, a day of happiness and of peace. May all my walk and conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Amen.

—John Baillie²⁸

AN EVENING PRAYER OF SELF-EXAMINATION

O Merciful Father, who dost look down upon the weaknesses of Thy human children more in pity than in anger, and more in love than in pity, let me now in Thy holy presence inquire into the secrets of my heart.

Have I today done anything to fulfill the purpose for which Thou didst cause me to be born?

Have I accepted such opportunities of service as Thou in Thy wisdom hast set before my feet?

Have I performed without omission the plain duties of the day?

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

Have I done anything to tarnish my Christian ideal of manhood?

Have I been lazy in body or languid in spirit?

Have I wrongfully indulged my bodily appetites?

Have I kept my imagination pure and healthy?

Have I been scrupulously honorable in all my business dealings?

Have I been transparently sincere in all I have professed to be, to feel, or to do?

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

Have I tried today to see myself as others see me?

Have I made more excuses for myself than I have been willing to make for others?

Have I, in my home, been a peace-maker or have I stirred up strife?

Have I, while professing noble sentiments for great causes and distant objects, failed even in common charity and courtesy towards those nearest to me?

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

²⁸ Reprinted from *A Diary of Private Prayer*, by John Baillie; copyright 1949 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers.

O Thou whose infinite love, made manifest in Jesus Christ, alone has power to destroy the empire of evil in my soul, grant that with each day that passes I may more and more be delivered from my besetting sins. Amen.

—John Baillie²⁹

A RECOLLECTION OF JESUS

Let us remember Jesus:

Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor and dwelt among us.

Who was content to be subject to his parents, the child of a poor man's home.

Who lived for nearly thirty years the common life, earning his living with his own hands and declining no humble tasks.

Whom the common people heard gladly, for he understood their ways.

May this mind be in us that was in Jesus Christ.

Let us remember Jesus:

Who was mighty in deed, healing the sick and the disordered, using for others the powers he would not invoke for himself.

Who refused to force men's allegiance.

Who was Master and Lord to his disciples, yet was among them as their companion and as one who served.

Whose meat was to do the will of the Father who sent him.

May this mind be in us that was in Jesus Christ.

Let us remember Jesus:

Who loved men, yet retired from them to pray, rose a great while before day, watched through a night, stayed in the wilderness, went up into a mountain, sought a garden.

Who, when he would help a tempted disciple, prayed for him.

Who prayed for the forgiveness of those who rejected him, and for the perfecting of those who received him.

Who observed good customs, but defied conventions which did not serve the purpose of God.

Who hated sin because he knew the cost of pride and selfishness, of cruelty and impurity, to men, and still more to his Father in heaven.

May this mind be in us that was in Jesus Christ.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Let us remember Jesus:

Who believed in men to the last and never despaired of them.

Who through all disappointment never lost heart.

Who disregarded his own comfort and convenience, and thought first of others' needs, and though he suffered long, was always kind.

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, threatened not.

Who humbled himself and carried obedience to the point of death, even death on the cross, and endured faithful to the end.

May this mind be in us that was in Jesus Christ.

O Christ, our only Saviour, so come to dwell in us that we may go forth with the light of Thy hope in our eyes, and with thy faith and love in our hearts. Amen.

—*From The Kingdom, The Power, and the Glory*³⁰

VITAL QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION FOR SELF AND THE PEOPLE

(a) Worship

Are these hours occasions of true devotion and of living spiritual experience?

Do you prepare yourself in heart, mind, spirit for this meeting with God?

Do you uphold and cherish a creative spiritual worship — with spaces of silence for listening and hearing God?

Is there a quickened sense of the brooding Spirit of God?

Are the spiritual gifts of the people being used, and do you foster their growth?

(b) Fellowship

Do you live in Christian love one toward another?

Do you manifest a forgiving spirit and a care for the reputation of others?

When differences arise, does the spirit of creative reconciliation bind you together in God?

(c) Message

Are you concerned to interpret to others our message of Peace, and do you work with others in commending God to men and women?

³⁰ Copyright 1933 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

(d) Personal Standards of Living

Do you endeavor to express in your daily lives the love and brotherhood, the sincerity and simplicity, which Jesus lived and taught?

Do you keep to moderation in your standards of living and pursuit of business, avoiding worldliness, self-indulgence and display? Are you frequent in the reverent reading of the Scriptures? Do you choose those recreations which will strengthen your physical, mental, and spiritual life, and avoid those that may prove a hindrance to yourselves and others? Do you so live that spiritual growth, family life, the interests of the church and public welfare may have their due share of your time and thought?

(e) Relation to Youth

Do you live in ever deepening love and understanding of children and young people?

Are you an example to them in the life of the fellowship?

Do you help them grow in their religious life? Do you help them to understand the inner spirit and faith of Brethren?

(f) Peace

Do you keep a clear testimony for peace? Do you work actively for it? Do you labor to remove the causes of war? Is your daily work a work in the arts of peace?

(g) Moral Testimonies

Do you maintain a faithful testimony against oaths? Do you avoid betting, lotteries, gambling of every kind, and speculation based on the principles of gambling? Do you avoid and discourage the use and handling of intoxicants and narcotic drugs, and do you actively uphold the cause of total abstinence?

(h) Social Conscience

Are you punctual in keeping promises, just in payment of debts, and honorable and Christian in all your dealings? Do you avoid undue expansion of your trade or business? Are you concerned that our economic system shall so function as to fulfill its part in sustaining and enriching life for all and do you endeavor to attain this end? Do you exercise care to deal with these who are delinquent in conduct, and do

you labor for their restoration in the spirit of meekness without partiality or unnecessary delay?

—*Adapted from Faith and Practice*³¹

FOR SELF-EXAMINATION BEFORE GOD

God has redeemed me through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Have I shown forth by my lips and life my thanks to Him for His unspeakable gift?

God has set before me an open door into His presence through worship and prayer. Have I daily entered it?

God has bestowed upon me particular gifts of body, mind, and spirit. Have I used those gifts, and all others from His hand, in obedience to His holy will?

God has placed me among a great people and has made of one blood all nations. Have I used my love of country to His glory, exalting His Kingdom above all rival claims?

God has called me to labor with Him, as I may, for peace on earth, good will among men. Have I put from me all tempers that make for strife and given myself to the fashioning of a great community of love?

O God, in Thy mercy forgive my blindness and sin. Open my eyes; show me Thyself. Help me henceforth to walk in Thy way, led by Thy wisdom and upborne by Thy might; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Georgia Harkness*³²

MINISTER'S MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS³³

Morning Prayers

Eternal Father of my soul, let my first thought today be of Thee, let my first impulse be to worship Thee, let my first speech be Thy name, let my first action be to kneel before Thee in prayer.

For Thy perfect wisdom and perfect goodness:

For the love wherewith Thou lovest mankind:

For the love wherewith Thou lovest me:

³¹ Used by permission of the Religious Society of Friends.

³² From *The Glory of God*, by Georgia Harkness. Used by permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

³³ These five prayers are reprinted from *A Diary of Private Prayer*, by John Baillie, copyright 1949 by Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission of the publishers.

For the great and mysterious opportunity of my life:
For the indwelling of Thy Spirit in my heart:
For the sevenfold gifts of Thy Spirit:

I praise and worship Thee, O Lord.

Yet let me not, when this morning prayer is said, think my worship ended and spend the day in forgetfulness of Thee. Rather from these moments of quietness let light go forth, and joy, and power, that will remain with me through all the hours of the day;

Keeping me chaste in thought:

Keeping me temperate and truthful in speech:

Keeping me faithful and diligent in my work:

Keeping me humble in my estimation of myself:

Keeping me honourable and generous in my dealings with others:

Keeping me loyal to every hallowed memory of the past:

Keeping me mindful of my eternal destiny as a child of Thine.

O God, who hast been the Refuge of my fathers through many generations, be my Refuge today in every time and circumstance of need. Be my Guide through all that is dark and doubtful. Be my Guard against all that threatens my spirit's welfare. Be my Strength in time of testing. Gladden my heart with Thy peace; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

O God my Creator and Redeemer, I may not go forth today except Thou dost accompany me with Thy blessing. Let not the vigour and freshness of the morning, or the glow of good health, or the present prosperity of my undertakings, deceive me into a false reliance upon my own strength. All these good gifts have come to me from Thee. They were Thine to give and they are Thine also to curtail. They are not mine to keep; I do but hold them in trust; and only in continued dependence upon Thee, the Giver, can they be worthily enjoyed.

Let me then put back into Thine hand all that Thou hast given me, rededicating to Thy service all the powers of my mind and body, all my worldly goods, all my influence with other men. All these, O Father, are Thine to use as Thou wilt. All these are Thine, O Christ. All these are Thine, O Holy Spirit. Speak Thou in my words today, think in my thoughts, and work in all my deeds. And seeing that it is Thy gracious will to make use even of such weak human instruments in the fulfillment of Thy mighty purpose for the world, let my life today be the channel through which some little portion of Thy divine love and pity may reach the lives that are nearest to my own.

In Thy solemn presence, O God, I remember all my friends and neighbors, my fellow townfolk, and especially the poor within our gates, beseeching Thee that Thou wouldst give me grace, so far as in me lies, to serve them in Thy name.

O blessed Jesus, who didst use Thine own most precious life for the redemption of Thy human brethren, giving no thought to ease or pleasure or worldly enrichment, but filling up all Thine hours and days with deeds of self-denying love, give me grace today to follow the road Thou didst first tread; and to Thy name be all the glory and the praise, even unto the end. Amen.

Evening Prayers

O Thou who art from everlasting to everlasting, I would turn my thoughts to Thee as the hours of darkness and of sleep begin. O Sun of my soul, I rejoice to know that all night I shall be under the unsleeping eye of One who dwells in eternal light.

To Thy care, O Father, I would now commend my body and my soul. All day Thou hast watched over me and Thy companionship has filled my heart with peace. Let me not go through any part of this night unaccompanied by Thee.

Give me sound and refreshing sleep:

Give me safety from all perils:

Give me in my sleep freedom from restless dreams:

Give me control of my thoughts, if I should lie awake:

Give me wisdom to remember that the night was made for sleeping, and not for the harbouring of anxious or fretful or shameful thoughts.

Give me grace, if as I lie abed I think at all, to think upon Thee.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips; when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.

To Thy care also, O Father, I would commend my friends, beseeching Thee to keep them safe in soul and body, and to be present in their hearts to-night as a Spirit of power and of joy and of restfulness. I pray for and and I pray also for the wider circle of all my associates, my fellow workers, my fellow townsmen and all strangers within our gates; and the great world of men without, to me foreign and unknown, but dear to Thee; through Jesus Christ our common Lord. Amen.

O Father in heaven, who didst fashion my limbs to serve Thee and my soul to follow hard after Thee, with sorrow and contrition of

heart I acknowledge before Thee the faults and failures of the day that is now past. Too long, O Father, have I tried Thy patience; too often have I betrayed the sacred trust Thou hast given me to keep; yet Thou art still willing that I should come to Thee in lowliness of heart, as now I do, beseeching Thee to drown my transgressions in the sea of Thine own infinite love.

My failure to be true even to my own accepted standards:

My self-deception in face of temptation:

My choosing of the worse when I know the better:

O Lord, forgive.

My failure to apply to myself the standards of conduct I demand of others:

My blindness to the suffering of others and my slowness to be taught by my own:

My complacency towards wrongs that do not touch my own case and my oversensitiveness to those that do:

My slowness to see the good in my fellows and to see the evil in myself:

My hardness of heart towards my neighbours' faults and my readiness to make allowance for my own:

My unwillingness to believe that Thou hast called me to a small work and my brother to a great one:

O Lord, forgive.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and give me the strength of a willing spirit. Amen.

Holy God, to whose service I long ago dedicated my soul and life, I grieve and lament before Thee that I am still so prone to sin and so little inclined to obedience:

So much attached to the pleasures of sense, so negligent of things spiritual:

So prompt to gratify my body, so slow to nourish my soul:

So greedy for present delight, so indifferent to lasting blessedness:

So fond of idleness, so indisposed for labour:

So soon at play, so late at prayer:

So brisk in the service of self, so slack in the service of others:

So eager to get, so reluctant to give:

So lofty in my profession, so low in my practice:

So full of good intentions, so backward to fulfill them:

So severe with my neighbours, so indulgent with myself:

So eager to find fault, so resentful at being found fault with:
So little able for great tasks, so discontented with small ones:
So weak in adversity, so swollen and self-satisfied in prosperity:
So helpless apart from Thee, and yet so little willing to be bound
to Thee.

O merciful heart of God, grant me yet again Thy forgiveness.
Hear my sorrowful tale and in Thy great mercy blot it out from the
book of Thy remembrance. Give me faith so to lay hold of Thine
own holiness and so to rejoice in the righteousness of Christ my
Saviour that, resting on His merits rather than on my own, I may
more and more become conformed to His likeness, my will becoming
one with His in obedience to Thine. All this I ask for His holy
name's sake. Amen.

SCRIPTURAL AIDS FOR PASTORS IN PASTORAL VISITATION

(To be read before going out to call)

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of
Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give
them warning from me. . . . Nevertheless if you warn the righteous
man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he
took warning; and you will have saved your life" (Ezekiel 3: 17, 21).

Other scriptures: Jeremiah 23: 1-4; Ezekiel 3: 18-20; Ezekiel 34: 1-6;
Acts 18: 9-10; Acts 20: 17-35; 2 Corinthians 6: 3; 1 Peter 5: 2-4

(To be used in pastoral ministry)

In counseling: Proverbs 3: 1-7; Luke 11: 9-13; Romans 1: 16;
Romans 8: 1-18; Philippians 4: 8-13; Colossians 3: 1-3;
1 Thessalonians 5: 15-22; 2 Timothy 2: 15

Confession and forgiveness: Psalm 51: 9-13; Daniel 9: 5-10; 1 John
1: 9

Companionship with Christ: Matthew 28: 30

Confusion: Deuteronomy 33: 27; Psalm 46: 1, 10, 11; John 14: 27

Comfort: Psalm 23; Psalm 90; Psalm 91; Psalm 103: 1-8; Psalm 121;
Matthew 11: 28-30

On approaching death: Psalm 23; John 14: 1-3; John 14: 27;
Revelation 1: 17-18; Revelation 21: 1-4; Revelation 22: 1-5

Getting along with people: Matthew 18; Romans 12: 9-21

God's mercy: Psalm 103: 11; Luke 15

Secret of happiness: Matthew 5: 3-12; 1 Corinthians 13

Illness: Psalm 91: 1-6; Psalm 103: 27; Isaiah 40: 29-31; 1 Corinthians 13; James 5: 13-15

Need of pardon: Psalm 51

Penitence: 1 John 1: 9; Revelation 3: 20

Temptations: 1 Corinthians 10: 13; James 1

Worry: Matthew 6: 25-30

H. *The Service of Consolation and Memory*

Sorrow is to be consecrated to God. It is to be the occasion of a new self-offering to God—a truly sacramental act of resting life, its pain, perplexity, and purpose in the very heart of God. The world in its materialism and naturalism often exploits the lonely sorrowing heart—but the ministry must guide the aching heart away from the clutches of this aridness and emptiness, into the simplicity of childlike trusting in God. This would mean a simple but meaningful memorial service without the overbuying and showiness that is encouraged today. Also, a directing of the sorrowing away from the body which is the outworn shell of the soul—to the ongoingness of that spirit in God's Beyond.

FIRST ORDER OF MEMORIAL SERVICE

Organ Prelude (hymns of faith and assurance played quietly)

Opening Sentences

Prayer (one of the following or one in the minister's own words)

Eternal God, our heavenly Father, who lovest us with an everlasting love, and canst turn the shadow of death into the morning, help us now to wait upon Thee with reverent and believing hearts. In the silence of this hour speak to us of eternal things, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope, and be lifted above our darkness and distress into the light and peace of Thy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most

gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Thou, the eternal Goodness, who so carest for every one of us, as if Thou caredst for him alone, and so for all, as if all were but one, blessed is the man who loves Thee, and his friend and kinsman in Thee. For he alone loses no one dear to him, in whom all are dear in Thee, who never can be lost. Therefore unto Thee we commit that which we have received from Thee, and so shall that which we have loved in Thee be kept in Thee. For Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (minister and people)

A Hymn of Assurance (optional)

Readings From the Scriptures

Meditation

Prayer

Organ Postlude

A SECOND MEMORIAL SERVICE³⁴

Musical Prelude (by singers or instrument)

Opening Sentences

As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.
For he knows our fame;
he remembers that we are dust.

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;

³⁴ Adapted from a service arranged by Edgar Rothrock.

and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then without my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Invocation

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who art our Refuge and Strength, and a very present help in time of trouble; enable us, we pray Thee, to put our trust in Thee, and seeing that we have a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, may we come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in this time of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn or Special Music

Reading of Poems of Consolation (see pages 95-105)

Scripture Reading (see pages 89-91)

Prayer

Hymn or Special Music

Obituary

Sermon

Prayer (the needs of the bereaved should be sympathetically and helpfully expressed)

Hymn or Special Music

Benediction

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Viewing the Body. Quiet instrumental music or hymns are appropriate.

A THIRD MEMORIAL SERVICE

THEME: THIS FAITH

(For a memorial service in which the use of a printed form is desired)

Organ Prelude

Opening Sentence

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Prayer of Adoration and Gratitude (all uniting)

Father Eternal, fountain of life and light, Thou art the master light of all our seeing, the creative source of all that liberates and lifts human life, the One who inspires and answers the homing cry of our spirits and who nurtures the highest and holiest in life.

Thou dost believe in us when we cannot believe in ourselves. Thou dost see possible good in human life and in history where we see only evil. Thou dost bring good out of the most unlikely conditions and continuest Thy redemptive ministry in the face of human unworthiness. How infinite is Thy faith in us; how measureless is Thy love for us; how boundless is Thy hope that men will turn again home and fulfill their appointed destiny.

Thou art the life of men and callest us to life. How quiet and persistent is Thy pursuit of our lives. We thank Thee that Thou dost not let us go on without intimations of Thy presence and purpose. We thank Thee for the living, and those gone on, who found their rest and peace in Thee. Thou ever bringest life through weakness into strength; through bewilderment to insight; through confusion to a sense of direction; through the tragic into the triumphant; through even death into enduring life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Response by Choir

The Beatitudes of Christian Devotion (all uniting)

Blessed are they who respond to God's seeking love.

Blessed are they who let God be God in life.

Blessed are they whose lives are open to the lifting winds of God.

Blessed are they who discern something of God in every one.

Blessed are they who are God's instruments — strengthening the weak; breaking the bonds of the imprisoned; giving vision to the unseeing; giving heart to the disheartened; inspiring the songless

with song; bringing the broken into a new wholeness; arousing the indifferent to life's meaning; charting the laws of spiritual well-being.

Blessed are they who rise with God to love of all life.

Blessed are they who build bridges of understanding and who establish highways of reconciliation.

Blessed are they who never outgrow a sensitiveness to spiritual need.

Blessed are they whom Christ masters—and who share His sufferings for a new world.

Blessed are they who are won by Christ's immeasurable love — and who love God in Him without measure.

Blessed are they who are so overcome by Christ's limitless love that they love their neighbor and enemy in Him without reserve.

Blessed are they who commend Christ to everyone — and who commend everyone to Christ, the Life Giver.

Blessed are they who in Christ so live for God that the life of God is unveiled in them.

Choir Selection

The Symbolism of Memorial (organist)

Lighting of Candle or Candles and Reading of Name or Names

The Affirmation of God's Care and Present Activity

God is the Guardian and Keeper of all souls, and the Guiding Hand of history.

God's care reaches beyond human sight, thought, and imagination.

God's activity is life preserving, renewing, and transforming.

God's love ever upholds the lives of His people—those on this side of the Great Divide and those on that side.

God's grace enables one to live within history and yet above history.

God is the measure of meaningful life.

God's people in every age travel toward a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

God ever builds the Eternal City amid the falling cities of humanity.

Eternal God, unwearying builder of that which endures, Thou ever keepest the world from complete chaos, bringest order into the disorder of life and society, and unfailingly keepest "the light" burning in the eras of darkness and judgment. Thou maintainest a faithful witness in Thy faithfulness. Through these, living and dead, Thou continuest to speak and make known Thy will. Through the mystery of Thy working Thou sustainest life

committed to Thee. Even now, Thou art using the heartache of the age to bear witness to Thy saving truth for men. And Thou art making our rough and blundering course a testimony to Thy way for the world. In the joy and comfort of this Thy care, guidance, and redemptive grace we give Thee thanks, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Choir Selection

Litany of Consecration and Commitment

Minister: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, and strength.

People: Lord, incline our hearts so to love Thee — and Thee only.

Minister: Herein is love, not that we loved God—but that He loved us, and sent His Son for us.

People: Lord, incline our hearts to be open, receptive, and responsive to Thy love.

Minister: Hereby know we love—because He laid down His life for us.

People: Lord, incline our minds to discern the meaning of His self-giving for us.

Minister: A new commandment give I unto you — that ye love one another as I have loved you.

People: Lord, create in us this will to give ourselves to one another and for one another.

Minister: Seek first the Kingdom of God.

People: Lord, incline us to be constantly under Thy rule.

Minister: One is your Master and all ye are brethren.

People: Lord, incite in us the will to fellowship.

Minister: Pray without ceasing.

People: Lord, keep us persistent in the practice of Thy presence.

Minister: If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

People: Lord, make us ready and willing to endure all things for the healing of the world's wounds.

Minister: There is one Lord, faith, and fellowship of the Spirit.

People: Lord, incline us to witness faithfully to this reality, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer (all uniting)

Father all-gracious, Thou who dost unceasingly stand at the portals of life ready to give us all things that pertain to life and godliness and who dost purpose to unite humanity into one body in Christ, come and carry Thy work forward through our lives, make Thy home in our hearts, make our minds the instruments of Thy thought, make our wills witness to Thy will, to the end that the tumult of these days may cease, that the spirit of reconciliation may heal the open wounds of the world, that humanity may be delivered from the dreadful scourge of strife and war, that all peoples may be humbled under the reality of Thy gracious Fatherhood and bound to one another in the spirit of brotherhood in Christ. Help us to hold this torch of faith high even in the face of the fierce winds of destruction that blow upon the world. In this Thou art able to enable us through Christ. Amen.

Response by Choir "Three-fold Amen"

Hymn (people standing)

Benediction and Response by Choir "Seven-fold Amen"

Organ Postlude

FIRST SERVICE AT THE GRAVE

Scriptures

At the grave after the casket has been placed and the people assembled, the minister may say:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.—*Psalm 23: 4*

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.—*1 Thessalonians 4: 13-14*

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this

mortal nature must put on immortality.— *1 Corinthians 15: 49, 53*

Or Psalm 46, Psalm 121, or Revelation 7: 9 may be read.

Poem (pages 95 to 105), *Hymn, or Prayer*

Committal

Forasmuch as the soul of our brother (sister) has entered into everlasting life, we commit his (her) body to its resting place,* looking unto Him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

SECOND SERVICE AT THE GRAVE

When the casket has been put in its place and the family and friends have been assembled, then shall the minister say as he faces the casket:

We would not have you ignorant concerning those which have fallen asleep. . . . As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. Therefore,

Cherishing memories that are forever sacred;

Sustained by a faith that is stronger than death; and

Comforted by the hope of a life that shall endless be;

We commit to the good earth (to this sacred and hallowed place) the body of our departed loved one and friend, but his immortal and everlasting spirit we commend and commit into the care and keeping of Him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Words of Comfort and Encouragement

The minister shall then turn to the family and friends and say:
May the love of God be above you to overshadow you;

* In case of cremation read: "We therefore return the body to the elements."

Beneath you to uphold you;
Before you to guide you;
Behind you to protect you;
Close beside you and within you to make you able for all things;
And to reward both your faith and your faithfulness with the joy and the peace which the world cannot give,
Neither can it take away;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory in your lives now and forevermore.

Benediction

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

RESOURCES FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Sentences From the Scriptures

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

For he will give his angels charge of you
to guard you in all your ways.
He will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
for this time forth and for evermore.

The eternal God is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.

For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present aid in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear. . . .

As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted. . . .

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Readings From the Scriptures

General: Proverbs 31; Psalm 23; Psalm 27: 1, 4, 5, 13, 14; Psalm 27: 1, 3, 5, 11; Psalm 39: 4, 5a and b, 12; Psalm 46: 1-5, 7; Psalm 90: 1, 2, 4-6, 10, 12, 17; Psalm 103: 1-18; Psalm 121; Psalm 130: 1-6; Psalm 139: 1-2, 6-13; Psalm 139: 1-12, 17, 18, 23, 24; Isaiah 40; Isaiah 54: 7, 8, 10; Matthew 5: 3, 4, 6-8; John 14: 1-6; John 14: 15-19, 25, 27; John 16, 33; Romans 8: 14, 16-18, 31-35,

37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 35-38, 42-44, 49, 53-58; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4; Revelation 7; Revelation 7:14-17; Revelation 21:22

For Faithful Men and Women: Numbers 23:10; Proverbs 31:10-12, 25-31; Matthew 25:34-36, 40; Romans 8:14-17, 28; 1 Corinthians 2:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; Hebrews 12:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:3-9; Revelation 7:9-17; Revelation 21:7

For Children: 1 Samuel 3:10; 2 Samuel 12:18-20, 22, 23; Job 1:21; Isaiah 40:11; Mark 10:15-16

For Youth: 1 Samuel 20:3; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 38:10; Isaiah 65:6; Jeremiah 15:9; John 11:21-28, 32-36

For the Aged: Genesis 5:24; Genesis 47:9; 2 Samuel 3:38; Job 5:27; Psalm 92:13-14; Psalm 116:15; Acts 11:24; Acts 13:36

Prayers

O God, who art and wast and art to come, before whose face the generations rise and pass away; age after age the living seek Thee and find that of Thy faithfulness there is no end. Our fathers in their pilgrimage walked by Thy guidance and rested on Thy compassion. Still to their children be Thou the cloud by day, the fire by night. Take now the veil from every heart and join us in one communion with all these Thy servants, who trusted in Thee, and were not ashamed. Amen.³⁵

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: make us, we beseech Thee, mindful of the fewness of our days. Let Thy Spirit lead us through this short life in holiness and righteousness that, when we shall have served Thee in our generations, we may be gathered to our fathers, in favor with Thee, in charity with our fellow men and having the testimony of a good conscience; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³⁶

³⁵ From *A Book of Worship for Free Churches*, copyright 1948 by the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches. All rights reserved.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Blessed are all Thy saints, our God and King, who have travelled over the tempestuous sea of our mortality and have at last found harbor in Thy peace and felicity. Cast, we beseech Thee, a gracious eye upon us, who are still in our dangerous voyage. Succor us when we are exposed to the storms of trouble and temptation. Guard us against negligence and cowardice, and defend us from the frailty of our own hearts, granting us at the last that we bring our vessel safe to our desired haven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³⁷

O God, who healest the broken^a in heart, and bindest up their wounds; look in tender pity and compassion upon Thy servants whose joy has been turned into mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer to Thee and to one another by their common sorrow. As Thou hast given them this new tie to bind them to the world unseen, so grant unto them that where their treasure is, there may their hearts be also. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of Thy presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life wherein all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure as seeing Thee who art invisible. So dwell with them and be their God, until the day break and the shadows flee away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³⁸

Almighty and everlasting God, the Lord of life and death; we desire to acknowledge Thee in all our ways and in all the events which befall us. In sorrow of heart, yet in quietness and confidence, we have gathered for these tender offices of faith and love. Lift us above the shadow and the sadness of mortality into the light of Thy countenance and the comfort of Thy presence. Speak to each of us Thy word of peace. In this hour of our need we turn to Thee; to

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

whom else can we turn? We turn to Thee who hast the word of life. In sorrow as in joy, in loss as in gain, in life as in death, we confess Thee to be our only sufficient comfort and refuge.

Almighty Father, whose goodness loved us into life and whose mercies never fail; Thine is the beauty of childhood and Thine the light which shines in the face of age. We bless Thy holy name for this child, recalling all in him that made others love him. We praise Thee for all good and gracious influences with which Thou didst surround him, and for all that ministered to his joy and growth. In Thy love and wisdom Thou didst give him a home of faith and tender care, and didst nurture him by the fruits of the Spirit. For this we render unto Thee our gratitude. We thank Thee that even his brief life made his home and the circle of his friends the more blessed for his presence.

Merciful Father, we commend to Thee the sorrowing parents; Thy comfort be upon them. Touch their wounds with Thy hand of healing. Help them to be still and to know that Thou art God. May strength and consolation come to them through all precious memories and enduring hopes. May the words of Thy Son which speak of Thy care for little children bring peace into their hearts.

Most holy and merciful God, whose face the angels of Thy little ones do always behold in heaven; suffer us not to forget that by the mystery of death we are brought nearer to Thine infinite goodness, in which we must confide. Deepen our assurance that Thou wilt keep in perfect peace that which we commit unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³⁹

Almighty and everlasting God, who alone amid the changes of this mortal life abidest ever the same: We confess before Thee the uncertainty of our life upon the earth.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Thou hast made our days as a handbreadth; and our age is as nothing before Thee. All flesh is as grass; and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth; the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever. Therein is our hope, for Thou art our Father. We confess, even in the valley of the shadow of death, that Thou art with us. O Lord, make us to know our end, and the measure of our days what it is, that we may know how frail we are. Hear our prayer, and give ear unto our cry. Hold not Thy peace at our tears; for we are strangers with Thee and sojourners, as all our fathers were. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end. Amen.⁴⁰

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father: We thank Thee for the love that cares for us in life and watches over us in death. May we in faith and hope give back to Thee the life which in love was given us. We bless Thy name for our Saviour's joy in little children and for the assurance that of such is the kingdom of heaven. We believe that in death as in life they are in His holy keeping. In our sorrow make us strong to commit ourselves and those we love to Thy never failing care. In our perplexity may we trust where we cannot understand, knowing that the eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. In our loneliness make our remembrance grateful, and may we never forget that the God whom fatherhood and motherhood interpret will keep that which we have committed unto Him until the eternal morning breaks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.⁴¹

We beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, being inspired by the example of Thy saints, may run with patience

⁴⁰ From *The Book of Common Worship*, copyright 1946 by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Used by permission.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; so that when this mortal life is ended, we may be gathered with those whom we have loved, in the kingdom of Thy glory, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.⁴²

Poetry of Comfort and Assurance

The relevant sections of the three extant Brethren hymnals—*The Brethren Hymnal* (1901), *Hymnal: Church of the Brethren* (1925), and *The Brethren Hymnal* (1951)—contain many hymns the words of which would be appropriate for reading on funeral occasions. Other appropriate poems may be found in various anthologies of religious poetry.

AFTER SUNSET

If light of life outlive the set of sun
That men call death and end of all things, then
How should not that which life held best for men
And proved most precious, though it seem undone
By force of death and woeful victory won,
Be first and surest of revival, when
Death shall bow down to life arisen again?
So shall the soul seen be the self-same one
That looked and spake with even such lips and eyes
As love shall doubt not then to recognize,
And all bright thoughts and smiles of all time past
Revive, transfigured, but in spirit and sense
None other than we knew, for evidence
That love's last mortal word was not his last.

—Algernon Charles Swinburne

⁴² From *The Book of Common Order*. Used by permission of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the Church of Scotland.

AT LAST

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever-present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting:
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father! Let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier*

ETERNAL SPRING

Ye who fear death,
Behold the buds are bursting;
Ye who fear death,
Hark, how the robins sing;
Ye who fear death,
Go hear the crocus crying,
Eternal Spring!

Ye who fear death,
See how the trees are greening,
Risen to life before the April sun;
Ye who fear death,
Give way to joy and gladness,
New life's begun!

So has it been
Since days first had beginning,
Glad prophecies of Resurrection Morn;
Weep not before a closed tomb
In Joseph's garden,
Life is reborn!

—Ralph S. Cushman⁴³

RESURRECTION

As, in the return of the autumn,
Just preceding the winter's cold breath,
All plants in the temperate climate
Must yield to what seems to be death,
And then in the glorious springtime,
Beneath skies that are tranquil and blue,
At the call of the all-wise Creator
Awaken to life that is new—

So too will the souls of the faithful,
The trials of life safely past,
In life's autumn from earthly scenes taken,
As all must be taken at last,
In the dawn of God's glorious springtime,
Beneath skies that are tranquil and blue,
At the call of the kind, loving Father,
Awaken to life that is new.

—Ora W. Garber

⁴³ From *I Have a Stewardship*, copyright 1939 by Ralph S. Cushman. Used by permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

KNOWLEDGE

They list for me the things I cannot know:
Whence came the world? What Hand flung out
the light
Of yonder stars? How could a God of right
Ordain for earth an ebbless tide of woe?
Their word is true; I would not scorn their doubt,
Who press their questions of the how and why.
But this I know: that from the star-strewn sky
There comes to me a peace that puts to rout
All brooding thoughts of dread, abiding death;
And too I know, with every fragrant dawn,
That Life is Lord; that, with the winter gone
There cometh Spring; a great reviving Breath.
It is enough that life means this to me;
What death shall mean, some sunny Morn shall
see.

—*Thomas Curtis Clark*⁴⁴

Yet love will dream and faith will trust,
Since he who knows our needs is just,
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees,
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
That truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own!

—*From Snowbound, by John G. Whittier*

⁴⁴ Used by permission of Thomas Curtis Clark.

SUNSET

The setting sun drops low
Behind the western rim;
Its brilliant afterglow
Is fading, . . . fading, . . . dim.
As in the heavens above
The twinkling stars shine bright,
Out of his heart of love
God gives the peace of night.

My life some day must fade
As fades the setting sun,
Earth's cares aside be laid,
My earthly labors done.
I trust that there may be,
When life's ev'ning sun sinks low,
Lingering after me
A mellow afterglow.

—Ora W. Garber

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE

To weary hearts, to mourning homes
God's meekest angel gently comes.
No power has he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again;
And yet in tenderest love, our dear
And Heavenly Father sends him here.

There's quiet in the angel's glance,
There's rest in his still countenance!
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Or wounds with words the mourner's ear;
The ills and woes he may not cure
He kindly trains us to endure.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

'TIS SORROW BUILDS THE SHINING LADDER UP

'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
Whereon our feet planting, nearer God
The spirit climbs and hath its eyes unsealed.
True it is that Death's face seems stern and cold,
When he is sent to summon those we love,
But all God's angels come to us disguised.
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the front of God.
With every anguish of our earthly part
The spirit's path grows clearer; this was meant
When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay,
Life is the jailer; Death the angel sent
To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.

—James Russell Lowell

THE ROSE BEYOND THE WALL

Near a shady wall a rose once grew,
Budded and blossomed in God's free light,
Watered and fed by morning dew,
Shedding its sweetness day and night.
As it grew and blossomed fair and tall,
Slowly rising to loftier height,
It came to a crevice in the wall
Through which there shone a beam of light.
Onward it crept with added strength,
With never a thought of fear or pride;
It followed the light through the crevice's length
And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view,
Were found the same as they were before;
And it lost itself in beauties new,
Breathing its fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve
And make our courage faint and fall?
Nay! let us faith and hope receive;
The rose still grows beyond the wall;

Scattering fragrance far and wide,
Just as it did in days of yore,
Just as it did on the other side,
Just as it will forever more.

—*A. L. Frank*

THE ONE REMAINS

The one remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

—*John Keats*

O, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

—*From In Memoriam, by Alfred Tennyson*

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

No, not cold beneath the grasses,
Not close-walled within the tomb;
Rather, in my Father's mansion,
Living, in another room.

Living, like the one who loves me,
Like my child with cheeks abloom,
Out of sight, at desk or schoolbook,
Busy, in another room.

Nearer than my son whom fortune
Beckons where the strange lands loom;
Just behind the hanging curtain,
Serving, in another room.

Shall I doubt my Father's mercy?
Shall I think of death as doom,
Or the stepping o'er the threshold
To a bigger, brighter room?

Shall I blame my Father's wisdom?
Shall I sit enswathed in gloom,
When I know my loves are happy,
Waiting in another room?

—Robert Freeman⁴⁵

HE WALKS AHEAD

He is not dead, this friend; not dead,
But, in the path we mortals tread,
Got some few trifling steps ahead,
And nearer to the end,
So that you too, once past the bend,
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend
You fancy dead.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

⁴⁵ Used by permission of Mrs. Robert Freeman.

IMMORTALITY

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, Patience! in another life, we say,
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.
And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?

No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

—*Matthew Arnold*

“How can I cease to pray for thee? Somewhere
In God's wide universe thou art today.
Can He not reach thee with His tender care?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray?
Somewhere thou livest and hast need of Him,
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb,

And somewhere, too, there may be valleys dim
Which thou must pass to reach the heights sublime.
Then all the more because thou canst not hear
Poor human words of blessing, will I pray.
O true, brave heart, God bless thee, wheresoe'er
In God's wide universe thou art today!”

—*Julia Dorr*

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

—*From Thanatopsis, by William Cullen Bryant*

THE OPEN DOOR

You, my son,
Have shown me God;
Your kiss upon my cheek
Has made me feel the gentle touch
Of him who leads us on.
The memory of your smile, when young,
Reveals his face,
As mellowing years come on apace.
And when you went before,
You left the gates of heaven ajar
That I might glimpse,
Approaching from afar,
The glories of his grace.
Hold, son, my hand,
Guide me along the path,
That, coming,
I may stumble not
Nor roam,
Nor fail to show the way
Which leads us—home.

—*Mrs. Calvin Coolidge*⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Coolidge.

VICTORY

Long, long ago a cross was borne
Up to a lonely hill,
A tomb was sealed, a guard was set,
Death said, "I rule at will."

But lo! the tomb became a shrine
To point men to the stars,
For love cannot be sealed in tombs
Nor bound by iron bars.

No longer king, Death stands at bay;
He only holds the key
That swings aside the earthly door
To immortality.

—Myra Brooks Welch⁴⁷

III. SERVICES OF THE ASSEMBLED CHURCH

A. *Direction in Personal Preparation for Worship or Communion*

(Minister and people)

1. The examination of conscience and life by the use of the Ten Commandments. Using one each day.
2. The examining of conscience and life by the use of the Beatitudes. Using one each day.
3. The examining of conscience and life by the use of the Lord's Prayer. Using one phrase each day.
4. Prayer before all worship experiences.

⁴⁷ From *The Touch of the Master's Hand*, copyright 1943 by the Brethren Publishing House.

O God, show me myself. Open Thou my eyes that I may see myself as seen by Thee. Suffer not my sins to blind me, but aid my memory and quicken my conscience, that I may know what I have done. Strip off all excesses and pretexts and teach me to judge myself that I may not be judged of Thee. And make me to hate my sins, that I may truly repent and steadfastly purpose to lead a new life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Almighty God, who pourest out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace and supplication; deliver us, when we draw nigh to Thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections, we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, shed forth upon all those who confess Thy name throughout the world, the Spirit of Thy grace, building them up in faith, holiness, and love. Give wisdom to all who teach and rule in Thy church. Strengthen and confirm the faithful; instruct the ignorant; recover the erring; restore the penitent; remove whatever hinders us from godly union and concord; and grant us all to attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; for the sake of the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*From God's Board—A Manual for Holy Communion*⁴⁸

O most loving Father, who willest us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of Thee, and to cast all our care on Thee, who carest for us; preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which Thou hast manifested to us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God of Peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; by the might of Thy spirit lift us, we pray Thee, to Thy presence, where we may be still and know that Thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Constance Garrett*⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Reprinted by permission of the Morehouse-Gorham Company, publishers.

⁴⁹ From *Growth in Prayer*, by Constance Garrett. Copyright 1950. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

B. *The Love Feast and Communion*

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

The Church of the Brethren observes the communion as a part of the larger service which we call the love feast. It has always been one of the richest and most sacred occasions among us. In the love feast we celebrate the most precious aspects of our Christian experience: Christian love for one another and for all God's children, which finds dramatic and symbolic expression in the washing of feet and in the fellowship meal; acceptance anew of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our redemption and the redemption of all men, symbolized by the breaking and eating of the communion bread; and receiving by faith the divine life in Christ, as symbolized by the drinking of the cup.

The love feast is celebrated twice a year by most of our churches. While many churches have time-honored and conveniently established times, more and more churches are accepting Thursday evening of Passion Week and World Communion Sunday (first Sunday of October) as significant times for its observance.

The Setting and Arrangements

The love feast is the supreme worship service of the church and should therefore, wherever possible, be observed in the sanctuary with its exclusive worship associations. Where that is not possible, the place in which it is held should be made as worshipful and beautiful as possible. The worship center and all the tables should be lighted by candles. The soft and subdued light of a candle-lighted room inspires quietness and the mood of contemplative, aspiring worship. The tables should be arranged so that all are on one level and should be covered with clean white cloths. The deacons of the church, with the elder or pastor, should see that all material preparations have been made in an orderly, reverent and dignified way. (See *The Deacons*, page 276.)

Unleavened communion bread is usually prepared by the wives of ministers or deacons. (For the recipe, see *Granddaughter's Inglenook Cookbook*, page 31.) The unfermented juice of the grape is used for the sacrament of the cup. The meal should be kept as simple as possible.

Most churches have the feet-washing service at the tables. Some, however, have this service in side rooms or other convenient places. Wherever in the church it is observed, it should be done in an atmosphere of reverence and dignity. Quiet instrumental music or

the singing of appropriate and well-chosen hymns may accompany it.

All who assist the officiating elder should be seated near him at a table centrally placed so that all may see and hear him without difficulty. It is well for those responsible for seating communicants to see that older and younger persons are well distributed and that there is complete equality and fellowship in seating arrangements.

Some churches provide a nursery where mothers who otherwise could not attend the service can leave their little children.

Music

Quiet and appropriate music may be used prior to the service, during periods of silent meditation and prayer, the feet-washing service, and the fellowship meal.

Hymns should be chosen with care and sung by the entire congregation. The officiating elder and the directors of music should plan for the singing so that the most appropriate hymns are chosen. The hymns in the following order of service are suggestive. Similar hymns may be used instead of those designated.

Preparation

Preparation for the entire service should be made in great detail and with utmost thought and care. The officiating elder should arrange for participation of other ministers, deacons, or laymen in the Scripture readings, the prayers, and the direction of the music. There should be a deep sense of dependence upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and blessing in order that the service may not be formal and cold but a great enriching spiritual experience.

In the matter of spiritual preparation for the love feast, the church visit has traditionally held a very large place. Where that visit is no longer made, its purpose should still be held before the minds of the people. That purpose was and is that members should be at peace with one another. If there are any differences between members they should be resolved before those members come to the communion. Only then is fellowship with God possible (Matthew 5:23-24; 1 John 4:20). To be right with one's brother or sister, to have love in one's heart toward all men, to be humble and penitent, and to have a sincere faith in God, these are matters of the greatest importance as we approach the Lord's table.

Preparation for this sacramental experience with God must take on a new note of importance and urgency. It would be well for every family to visit the pastor before communion, for a complete clearing of mind and heart for full and receptive participation in the

sacraments of the church. Specific direction in reading, prayer, and meditation that would fit the family for this sacred observance should be given, the directions to be in keeping with the spiritual need and level of spiritual growth of the persons counseled. In large congregations the deacons can be trained to assist in this ministry of spiritual direction. It involves getting the mind open and receptive to God, open and forgiving towards others, and the kindling of holy aspiration and joyous expectancy. Then the church service of preparation for the corporate experience in the sacrament of the love feast and communion will be more vital, meaningful, and life enriching. Prepared individuals will mean a ready congregation. (See guidance on discipline for worship.)

The preparatory service itself may be held on a preceding evening, in the Sunday morning service nearest the love feast, or when the communicants have gathered for the service.

A SERVICE OF PREPARATION

If the service is held in the sanctuary, it may be lighted with candles.

Organ Prelude (hymns of the Passion played very quietly)

Call to Worship (minister)

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts
let him return to the Lord, that he
may have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

General Confession (minister and people uniting)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*From the Book of Common Prayer*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Used by permission of Dr. John Suter, the custodian of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The Silent Moments for Examination of Conscience (directed by a printed meditation)

Above all things, with exceeding humility of heart, and with suppliant reverence, with full faith, and dutiful anxiety for God's honor, you come to receive this sacrament. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to the utmost of thy power purify and make it clear, with true contrition and humble confession; so as there may be nothing in thee, that may weigh heavy upon thee, or that breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free access to the throne of grace.—*Book 4, chapter 7, of the Imitation of Christ.*

(The whole of this chapter provides excellent material for these quiet moments in self-examination.)

The Act of Self-Examination and the Will of God

MINISTER: Jesus said: Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

PEOPLE: It is the will of God; together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. That we should show forth His praises who called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light. That we should believe in Him and love Him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength. That we should worship Him and put our whole trust in Him all the days of our life.

MINISTER AND PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to do Thy will.

MINISTER: Jesus said: Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? Ye are the light of the world.

PEOPLE: It is the will of God: That our light should so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. That speaking the truth in love, we should grow up together in all things unto Him, which is the Head of the body, even Christ. That we should train our minds and be true in our thinking and just in all our judging. That we should be honest, truthful, and upright in thought, word, and deed. That we should be diligent and faithful in our vocations, doing our daily work in all

simplicity and integrity, and laboring only for the things which are just and good.

MINISTER AND PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to do Thy will.

MINISTER: Jesus said: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

PEOPLE: It is the will of God: That we should rule our spirits, bear with one another's infirmities, and as much as lieth in us live peaceably with all men. That we should live chiefly to minister to others' needs and not to seek only our own pleasure and gain. That we should do what we can to take away the sin and sorrow of the world and to overcome evil with good. That we should not be anxious for the morrow, nor for our life what we shall eat or what we shall drink, nor for the body what we shall put on.

MINISTER AND PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to do Thy will.

MINISTER: Jesus said: One is your Master and all ye are brethren. A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

PEOPLE: It is the will of God: That we love one another. That we give our lives for one another. That we labor for the peace and concord of all men. That we make our lives living sacrifices within and through the Body of Christ for the healing of the world.

MINISTER AND PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to do Thy will.

Hymn of Confession and Aspiration

General Prayer of Confession and Aspiration (minister and people)

God of all grace, God of purity and love, whose dwelling is in the contrite heart, hear the spoken and unspoken yearnings of Thy children for deliverance from all sin, and for union with Thy holy purposes. Grant us Thy mercy, and make clean our hearts within us, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading of the Scriptures: Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24; 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34

The Communion Meditation or Sermon

Hymn of Assurance

Period of Free Prayer

Confession, praise, intercession, re-consecration, etc. This period may well be given over to directed silent prayer — the period to close with the Lord's Prayer.

AN ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE LOVE FEAST

Printed bulletins may be used to give the people the largest possible degree of participation.

We need symbols to compass the ineffable things in our experience, especially our experience of God's love and grace in Christ. The highest cannot be spoken; it can only be acted. The sacraments of the love feast and communion are dramatic enactments of the life God gave to the world in Jesus Christ, the life God intends His children to live, the life to which we are committed, and to which we aspire by His unfailing companionship. So we dramatically relive the life of our Lord; we symbolically re-envision His holy sacrifice for our peace and fulfillment of life. What is so vividly pictured to the imagination in this sacred hour is to become life in and through us, so that we have a living testimony for our time, that we have been with Jesus.

Hymn (while participants are seated at the tables): *When We Walk With the Lord; Lo, a Gleam From Yonder Heaven; Sweetly, Lord, Have We Heard Thee Calling; or Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*

Scripture Reading: John 13: 1-17

Prayer (minister and people)

Thou living Lord, who didst stoop down to cleanse the human body, mind, and spirit, and who didst ask of life one thing only, that Thou mightest be the Servant of God to mankind in all ages, inspire in each one Thy spirit of humble and aspiring love as we live again in dramatic form the outline and pattern of Thy saving work for the

world. Of Thy mercy cleanse the heart of every one, and inspire in us all the spirit of redemptive servanthood. Amen.

Male Quartet: Hear Our Prayer, O Lord

1. The Symbolism of Servanthood

Proper facilities having been provided, the person at the end of each table shall gird himself with a towel and shall wash the feet of the person next to him, then shall greet him with the right hand of fellowship and the kiss of love. Then the person whose feet have been washed shall proceed in like manner to wash the feet of the next person and so until all have had part in the service. While this is being done, appropriate hymns may be sung, or there may be instrumental music.

This is that other sacrament which Jesus gave which it would be well if all Christendom observed. Through it Christ's love binds each to the other. The sanctity of each one is somehow bound up in the inscrutable designs of God with the sanctity of the others. So we wash one another's feet that we might learn patience and unselfish, gentle obedience, and be filled with the humility, the mutual forbearance, and the spirit of selfless helpfulness without which it is impossible to rise to the higher levels of spiritual life.

2. The Symbolism of Brotherhood

SCRIPTURE: John 15:9-17 or 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

HYMN

THANKS FOR THE MEAL

THE MEAL OF FELLOWSHIP

This is the hour to be hospitable to the holiest messenger of God; let pure and perfect trust fill all the room; let the Judas-element in our souls rise and quickly pass into the night; and the love that remains rest there with freer surrender upon the form of heavenly sanctity. — *James Martineau*

HYMN: *The Doxology* or *In Christ There Is No East or West*

3. The Symbolism of Christ's Saviorhood

HYMN: *Savior, Thy Dying Love* or *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 53; Mark 15:16-37; John 19:1-30

In the communion we re-enact the divine drama of redemption. Through it we are lifted out of our time-bound

lives. Once again the light shines around a tall figure in an upper room and we are there crying with the rest, "Lord, is it I?" The light fades and we hear the echoes of Gethsemane at night, riven with the agony of unanswered prayer. The darkness piles mountain high and becomes a Golgotha, pierced with a cry from a cross. It yields to an unbelievable dawn shining above an empty tomb. We have walked with Jesus, who, being dead, yet lives.—*Harold Fey*

HYMN: *There Is a Green Hill Far Away* or *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

INVITATION

The officiating minister may say:

We are about to celebrate the communion. All who are in love and fellowship with your brethren, who do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who humbly put your trust in Christ and desire His help that you may lead a holy life, draw nigh to God and receive these emblems to your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE BREAD

The minister shall uncover the communion bread, and, taking an unbroken piece in his hands, shall say:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then shall the officiating elder, holding the bread in his hands, pray in some such manner as this:

All glory and honor and thanksgiving be unto Thee, eternal God, our heavenly Father. We bless Thee for Thy Son, our Savior, for the beauty of His life, for His atoning death on Calvary's cross and for His living presence with us now. We present before Thee this bread, symbol of the broken body of our Lord, and pray that Thou wilt bless

and consecrate it from a common to a sacred and commemorative use. Bless us as we partake of it and may the Holy Spirit teach us more deeply the meaning of this sacrament. May the benefits of His death be anew applied to our hearts, and, as we remember that "he bore our sins in his body on the tree," help us more and more to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God through Him. In His name we pray. Amen.

Then all communicants shall say together with the officiating elder:

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

The officiating elder shall then break the piece of bread which he holds and give a piece to the brother next to him, after which all communicants shall break the bread to one another. Where the bread is placed on the tables, it may be broken across the table. When all are served, the bread shall be eaten in silence and reverent meditation upon the Savior's suffering for our salvation.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE CUP

The minister shall take a cup in his hands and say:

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Holding the cup in his hand, the officiating minister shall pray in some such manner as this:

Holy and loving Father, we look to Thee again and pray that Thy divine blessing may be upon this cup, emblem of the shed blood of our Lord. Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood, and for this our hearts go out to Thee in ardent thanks. We rejoice that we are justified freely by Thy grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sins. And now consecrate this cup as a memorial of our Savior's

shed blood, and as by faith we partake of it, may forgiveness and divine life be communicated to us anew. Amen.

Then all communicants shall say together with the officiating elder:

This cup of the New Testament is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Then all shall drink of the cup. If time is required for the distribution of the bread or the cup, hymns such as *Bread of the World, in Mercy Broken*; *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*; or *Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed* may be sung.

Silent Meditation.

Every celebration of the Lord's Supper is a service of communion of God's Church universal, represented by a special part of it, and the Communion as the Communion with the Lord is at the same time a mutual communion of all members of his people on earth and in heaven. To the church universal belong not only its members on earth and in time but also the departed.—*Rudolph Otto*

Prayer (minister and people)

O Living Lord, who art the Bread of Life, Thou hast fed us; O Master, who art the Life of God to us, Thou hast refreshed us. By the light of Thy purified spirit, Thou hast cleansed us; by Thy sacrifice, Thou hast renewed us in faith, hope, and love. By Thy love Thou hast bound us to one another with a bond stronger than death; Thou hast made a holy fire to burn in our hearts. How sacred and wonderful it is to worship Thee! How marvelous to yield our minds to a Mind wiser than our own and be taught! By Thy unbroken serenity of spirit, Thou hast calmed our spirits. Indeed, Thou hast healed our sorrows with Thy sympathy and love, and hast deepened in us the sense of belonging to a kingdom that has no end and that cannot fail. We thank Thee for the communion of saints, and the anticipated joys of Thy triumphant kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

THE TRADITIONAL LOVE-FEAST SERVICE

1. Introductory Features

HYMN: *When We Walk With the Lord or Nearer, My God, to Thee*

A BRIEF PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING: John 13:1-17

2. The Feet-washing: Love Expressed in Humble Service

Proper facilities having been provided, the person at the end of each table shall gird himself with a towel and shall wash the feet of the person next to him, then shall greet him with the right hand of fellowship and the kiss of love. Then the person whose feet have been washed shall proceed in like manner to wash the feet of the next person and so until all have had part in the service. While this is being done, appropriate hymns may be sung, or there may be instrumental music.

3. The Lord's Supper: Love Expressed in Fellowship

SCRIPTURE READING: John 15:9-17 or 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

HYMN: *Be Present at Our Table, Lord or In Christ There Is No East or West*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

THE FELLOWSHIP MEAL

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

In some of our churches this prayer is offered; in others it is omitted. When used this can be made a prayer of thanksgiving and of intercession for the church and for the whole family of God around the world.

4. The Communion: The Redemptive Love of God

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 53; Mark 15:16-37; or John 19:1-30

COMMUNION HYMN: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

INVITATION

The officiating minister may say:

We are about to celebrate the communion. All who

are in love and fellowship with your brethren, who do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who humbly put your trust in Christ and desire His help that you may lead a holy life, draw nigh to God and receive these sacred emblems to your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE BREAD

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For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then shall the officiating elder, holding the bread in his hands, pray in some such manner as this:

All glory and honor and thanksgiving be unto Thee, eternal God, our heavenly Father. We bless Thee for Thy Son, our Savior, for the beauty of His life, for His atoning death on Calvary's cross and for His living presence with us now. We present before Thee this bread, symbol of the broken body of our Lord, and pray that Thou wilt bless and consecrate it from a common to a sacred and commemorative use. Bless us as we partake of it and may the Holy Spirit teach us more deeply the meaning of the sacrament. May the benefits of Christ's death be anew applied to our hearts and, as we remember that "he bore our sins in his body on the tree," help us more and more to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God through Him. In His name we pray. Amen.

Then all communicants shall say together with the officiating elder:

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

The officiating elder shall then break the piece of bread which he holds and give a piece to the brother next to him, after which all

communicants shall break the bread to one another. Where the bread is placed on the tables, it may be broken across the table. When all are served, the bread shall be eaten in silence and reverent meditation upon the Savior's suffering for our salvation.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE CUP

The minister shall take a cup in his hands and say:

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Holding the cup in his hands, the officiating minister shall pray in some such manner as this:

Holy and loving Father, we look to Thee again and pray that Thy divine blessing may be upon this cup, emblem of the shed blood of our Lord. Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood, and for this our hearts go out to Thee in ardent thanks. We rejoice that we are justified freely by Thy grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sins. And now consecrate this cup as a memorial of our Savior's shed blood, and as by faith we partake of it, may forgiveness and divine life be communicated to us anew. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then all communicants shall say together with the officiating elder:

This cup of the New Testament is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Then all shall drink of the cup. If time is required for the distribution of the bread or the cup, hymns such as *Bread of the World, in Mercy Broken*; *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*; or *Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed* may be sung.

5. Conclusion

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND CONSECRATION

HYMN: *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* or *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*

BENEDICTION

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

The service being ended, the worshipers should leave the tables in reverent silence. That the spiritual impression of the service may be retained, a minimum of work should be done at the close.

CONFERENCE DECISION REGARDING ATTENDANCE AT COMMUNION

(Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1923-1944, pages 10 and 11)

We consider that two fundamental questions are raised with reference to fitness to participate in the love feast:

(a) The question of faith in the sacraments to be observed, and in the fundamental doctrines of which they are emblems.

(b) The question of loving obedience or willing attitude of heart to live up to these truths.

Scriptural Teachings on the Subject

1. In the order of services, as instituted by our Lord, he first washed his disciples' feet as an example of loving, humble service; then he ate with them a meal, which Paul calls the Lord's supper, in token of Christian fellowship and brotherhood; and, last of all, he instituted the communion of his body and blood.

2. Concerning the communion observance, the Scriptures may be summarized as follows:

(a) The basic truth, as taught by Jesus in John 6:48-63, i.e., Jesus is the bread of life. Any one eating his flesh and drinking his blood has eternal life. The Word and the Spirit constitute the life, available to the believer.

(b) This basic truth Jesus enshrined in the sacrament of the communion: the loaf representing his body ("the Word made flesh"), and the cup symbolizing his blood ("poured out for the life of the world") (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23). Paul also understood the sacrament of the communion to symbolize participation in the death and life of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:14-17; 11:23-26).

Worthy and Unworthy Participation

1. Some of the things which the Scriptures mention as disqualifying are as follows: Insincerity, hatred, faction, strife, jealousy, malice, railing, covetousness, reveling, fleshly lusts, adultery, wickedness, ungodliness, denying the Lord, etc.

2. The Scriptures teach that under such circumstances it is "impossible to eat the Lord's supper" and that those who are thus "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" are not benefited, but rather made worse, and because of their guilt "eat and drink judgment unto themselves."

3. In order to participate in a worthy manner, the communicant must ex-

perience in his heart the identification with Christ, which these emblems signify, i.e.,

- (a) An acknowledgement of unworthiness in ourselves.
- (b) Living faith in Jesus Christ, as our all-sufficient Savior.
- (c) Loving, loyal obedience to him as our Lord.
4. This would require, in the participant, a process of self-examination and a renewal of vows of consecration to his Lord.

The Duty of the Church

1. The church should provide for such preparation of heart:
 - (a) By a carefully prepared and appropriate sermon, and
 - (b) By an opportunity for private conferences, for all who may desire.
2. If anything is known to exist that would disqualify any member or members from communing in the true spirit, the matter should be adjusted beforehand, with a view of preparing such persons for the service.
3. In case matters cannot be adjusted, prior to the service, and in case any are Scripturally disqualified, the church would be justified in debarring such persons from the communion until adjustments may be made.

A SERVICE FOR PRIVATE COMMUNION

(For the sick and shut-in members)

Let the minister provide himself with a small communion set.

If a quartet is available, let them sing several of the great Passion and comfort hymns of the church.

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:22-25; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Prayer

O God our Father, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, and who pourest out on all who desire it, the spirit of yearning for fuller life, Thou dost awaken us to the deep needs of human life. Deliver us now, as we draw near to Thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind; that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Invitation

My brother (or sister), as we draw near the Lord's table, let us earnestly consider the great need of having our comfort and strength renewed in this our earthly pilgrimage and warfare; and especially how necessary it is that we come to this time of communion with knowledge, faith, repentance and love; with hearts hungering and thirsting after

Him. Take then these emblems of our Lord's life with faith to the comforting of your heart, the quieting of your spirit, and the strengthening of your body.

Consecration Prayer

O Master, who hast consecrated for us a new and living Way, and who art present to illumine our hearts with Thy truth, to quicken our emotions with Thy love, to fortify our wills with Thy power, grant that we may so receive this bread and this cup that our lives may be truly yielded to the sway of Thy Spirit. As we remember Thy sacrifice for us, grant Thy Holy Spirit to sanctify this bread and this wine, which we now offer to Thee, that they may become the symbols of Thy body broken for us and Thy life poured out in our behalf. May they beget in us a true penitence, a quickened faith, and the renewal of hope within us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Giving of the Bread

My brother (or sister), take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Cup of Remembrance

My brother (or sister), drink this in remembrance that Christ died for you and be thankful.

The Lord's Prayer (minister and communicant)

Benediction

The blessings of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit be yours, to the assuaging of your mind and heart today and always. Amen.

C. Licensing and Ordaining Ministers

LICENSING MINISTERS

Authority for and Procedure

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1942)

. . . When one desires to administer the teaching function as a pastor or an evangelist, . . . that one should be set apart or licensed by an action of the

church and should receive training for such service. One having this desire may volunteer. This application should be made in writing, with reasons attached, to the official board of the church. Members of the district board should be informed and the two boards should examine the volunteer with reference (a) to his or her aims, (b) to natural ability, (c) to moral and spiritual fitness, (d) to willing preparation for the duties of the ministry. If and when these boards are satisfied that the applicant qualifies, he or she shall be licensed as directed in the minutes of the Annual Meeting and the order of service as printed in the Pastor's Manual. Such licentiate should not be ordained to the ministry until ready to take up active service.

If in the judgment of the official board, there is material in the congregation, but such party does not volunteer, the local board should request the district board to assist in holding an election. If the congregation makes a choice and the one so chosen accepts the call, the examination and the licensing shall take place as set forth above. [See excerpt from 1946 minutes, below.]

The classification of ministers in the Church of the Brethren shall be as follows: Licentiates, Ordained Ministers, and Ordained Elders.

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1922)

We also decide that sisters, who are properly qualified, may be licensed by the church to preach. These licenses may be renewed from year to year. When, in the judgment of the church and the District Ministerial Board, their work and interest justify it, they may receive permanent licenses to preach.

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1946)

Brethren who are called by the church to preach shall be licensed by the church to preach, but not to perform the other functions of the ministry, until such time as the church and the district ministerial board shall decide to ordain them into the ministry. If they have not been ordained within a year, the license may be renewed by the church from year to year, until such brethren either accept and are ordained into the ministry, according to previous decisions, or are discontinued as licensed preachers; or if in the judgment of the church and the district ministerial board the best interest of the church can be served, these brethren may be given license to preach for an indefinite time.

Plan of Election

Election by the majority vote is desirable, and prayer and labor shall be freely given to make it possible. After the scriptures setting forth the qualifications of the ministry have been read and explained, and earnest prayer has been made for enlightenment and guidance, the vote of the church shall be taken. If one receives a majority of all the votes cast, he shall be declared elected. If no one receives a majority vote, at the judgment of the election board and the elder-in-charge, the one receiving the highest number of votes may be declared elected; or the facts may be reported to the church without giving names, the report to be followed by fervent prayer for spiritual guidance; also further teaching may be given, if thought necessary. The vote of the church shall be taken again, and if one does not receive a majority vote, again another season of prayer may be

engaged in and another vote taken. This may be repeated once or twice, and if one does not receive a majority vote, and it seems not good to the election board and the elder-in-charge to declare an election with a plurality vote, the election may be declared off.

Some churches will want to give consideration to an alternate plan of selecting ministers. The moderator and the pastor, in co-operation with the ministerial committee of the church, will periodically consider the young men of the congregation, and if one be found who seems to have the necessary qualifications for the ministry or other church vocations, they will arrange an interview with him. At that time they will explain why he was selected, instruct him regarding the necessary qualifications, and present him with the opportunities and challenges of the Christian ministry. They will counsel him to give the matter serious consideration and seek the will of God through heart searching and prayer. After giving the young man ample time for a careful and prayerful consideration of the matter they will seek his answer. If his response is favorable they will present his name to the board of administration, or the local ministerial board, for consideration and recommendation to the church council.

If the response is unfavorable he should be appraised of the glorious opportunities of Christian laymanship.

Qualifications

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1917)

1. Moral and Spiritual: 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:2-4; Titus 1:5-9. Above all, the minister should be spiritual; sound in the faith and doctrines of the New Testament—such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the atonement, regeneration, the condition of pardon, New Testament ordinances, etc. He should not be greedy of filthy lucre, not worldly-minded; but on the other hand, he shall have the mind of Christ, and withal willing to suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2. Mental and Educational: 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17. The scriptures cited exhort every minister to make the preparation that will insure an efficiency approved of God. While we do not fix a standard of educational qualifications, we do encourage college and Biblical training; when necessary, the church should assist in obtaining it. To those elected to the ministry, who cannot reasonably acquire said training, we recommend a Home Study Course arranged by the Educational Board. . . . Those ministers who cannot avail themselves of these advantages, but who are rendering faithful service notwithstanding, are hereby encouraged to continue their fruitful labors, and the church should give them her fullest support.

Form to Be Used in Licensing

Entering the ministry is a serious and solemn undertaking. The

candidate needs to be sure that the step being taken is by the constraint of the Holy Spirit. Not only should there be many hours of honest and earnest counseling with church leadership on the meaning of the ministry, but it would be well for the candidate to make a three- to five-day retreat at some spiritual center where in meditation, prayer, and quiet, he could become sure of direction. When he has declared his decision and desire to be licensed, the church can fittingly appoint him to preach. The hour of setting apart for preaching the gospel should be a high hour of worship for young and old. And so far as possible young people should take part in the act of consecrating one of their number. Let the entire service be built around the idea of God's call and surrender to it. Avoid making this act a mere part of another worship service.

At the time when the candidate presents himself before the worship center of the church in dedication to preaching, the officiating minister shall say:

Our Lord came preaching the gospel of God. And God still lays this claim upon persons, to present His truth in Jesus Christ for the healing of the world's wounds. The church, which is the Body of Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is directed to commission men and women to the ministry. You have offered yourself to the church, believing that the Holy Spirit is guiding you. It is the mind of the church to license you to preach. Also that you further explore carefully and thoroughly the meaning of this commitment to enter the ministry.

1. Do you believe that God is leading you to take this step?

Candidate: I do.

2. Do you willingly submit yourself to the further counsel and guidance of qualified and designated leadership in the church?

Candidate: I do.

3. Do you purpose to follow a spiritual discipline of devotional reading, meditation, and prayer, as well as a systematic study of Christian doctrine, and the meaning and work of the ministry today?

Candidate: I do.

4. Do you purpose to live in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so to interpret Him by word and life, that the church may increasingly become the fellowship of peace and redemption in this world?

Candidate: I do.

5. Do you intend to be subject to and guided by the Holy Spirit, so far as your future relation to the ministry is concerned?

Candidate: I do.

Then shall the officiating minister say:

You are therefore committing yourself to a period of service in preaching the gospel, and also of exploring what it means to be in the ministry, and of discovering whether you are fitted by temperament, training, and the will to sacrifice for this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Only as you faithfully pursue the purposes affirmed today can you become certain of God's will for your life. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are authorized by the church to preach the gospel.

Then may follow a prayer of commitment and consecration, the officiating minister and the licentiate uniting.

Grant, Father, that one unfailing purpose may control all the variety of my thoughts and deeds. Help me so to bear myself in every action, outer and inner, that I may grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and help me to help others under my influence so to grow. Keep my thoughts from wandering, and so strengthen my purpose and will that each day's end may bring a sense of accomplishment and of time well spent. Grant that devotion may enrich my spirit, and study discipline my mind. Help me to think of people one by one, in every variety of station and need, and above all to remember those who seem to be forgotten. Help me, being myself as a little child, to win the affection and trust of little children, and grant that over every threshold I cross I may carry some

gleam of His Spirit whose touch brings peace, and in whose name I pray. Amen.—*Adapted from Prayers for the Minister's Day*⁵¹

Certificate to Be Granted
(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1922)

The Brethren Publishing House shall provide an appropriate certificate, which will be properly filled out by the church and given to the brother or sister who is licensed to preach.

This certificate may be secured from the Brethren Publishing House, Elgin, Illinois, and should be signed by the elder or pastor and the church clerk.

Prayers of the Licentiate
A Daily Prayer and Meditation

O Thou who knowest all my thoughts, and from whom no secret is hidden, help me so to order the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart that they may be acceptable in Thy sight. In my little seasons of success save me from prideful exaltation of myself. In my too-frequent seasons of failure save me from despondency. Forbid that I should ever make any recognition of what I do well the measure of my sense of success. Help me to receive criticism, to take advice gladly, and not be too much cast down in the seeming defeat of my cherished plans. Deliver me from thinking too much about myself, and by Thy grace save me from envy or jealousy of my fellow ministers. Help me to be generous in my appreciations, and greatly sparing of my complaints, being instead grateful to Thee for the blessings with which my pilgrim ways have been brightened. In His name, whose ministry was compassion. Amen.—*From Prayers for the Minister's Day*⁵²

Remembering My High Calling

Through every hour of this new day, O God, I would be fully aware of the inexpressible privilege of being Thy servant, I would be fully alive to my supreme responsibility as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thou hast given into my hands the Holy Scriptures. Constrain

⁵¹Edited by Thomas A. Goodwin. Reprinted by permission of the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

⁵²*Ibid.*

me to spend much time with them. Help me to engrave their words and their truth upon my own mind and heart. Enable me by every known skill of science and art to preach their life-giving doctrines with persuasive and compelling power, so that men may love Thy Word and obey Thy Law.

Thou hast called me to be a Christian prophet in this generation. Be Thou Thyself ever with me. Grant that through faithful study, unflagging prayer, blameless living, and self-giving service I may come to understand the ways of men and of society, and may merit from Thee some revelation of Thy present will for men and of the ways and means of bringing in Thy Kingdom on the earth.

Thou hast set me before Thine altar to lead Thy people in their worship of Thee. Endow me with the sensibilities of an artist and the holiness of a saint that I may fitly bear to Thee the petitions of Thy people and may unerringly direct their minds and hearts into Thy very presence.

Thou hast made me a spiritual shepherd of Thy people. May their well-being be my chief concern. Fill my heart with love for all of them and for each of them. Give me zeal to know and serve them in their work and in their play, in their joys and in their sorrows, in their tears and in their hopes, in their failures and in their aspirations.

And grant that in all that I do and say and think this day I may manifest the spirit and mediate the grace of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.—*From Prayers for the Minister's Day*⁵³

ORDAINING MINISTERS

Ordination to Be in Charge of the District Ministerial Board (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1927, 1942)

The district ministerial board shall have in charge the ordination of ministers to the eldership approved by the elders of the district, and the installation of ministers from the licentiates in accord with the minutes of General Conference.

Special Sermon at Ordination (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1917)

The duties of the minister to the church and in general, also the duties of the church to the minister, shall be clearly set forth in a special sermon at the time of ordination.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Qualifications

(See qualifications of licensed preachers, page 124.)

Duties and Responsibilities

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1917)

1. There shall be two degrees in the ministry, to be known as ministers and elders. All ministers who, at the time of the adoption of this report, are serving in the first and second degrees, shall be designated as ministers.

2. The duties of the minister are to preach the Word, to administer baptism, to serve the communion in the absence of an elder or at his request; to solemnize marriage, in brief, to assist the elder faithfully in the general work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Form to Be Used in Ordaining Ministers

Preparation for this act should receive careful planning by those in charge that it might be a new high hour in the life of the one ordained and in the life of the congregation where the service is held. The licentiate has now come to the place where he is certain that God is calling him into the ministry — the actual hour of his dedication to the pastoral ministry could be preceded by a week's retreat at some spiritual-life center, where in quiet and earnest meditation the pattern of ministry may take form in his mind through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The hour of ordination means the taking upon one's life the burden of our Lord as outlined in Luke 4: 14-19. This step is not to be taken lightly. This is indeed a solemn act of consecration, and integrity in taking the vows is basic. Again this service should not be a mere part of another service; it should be the service of the hour — with everything centering in the principle of dedicating life to God, and the church's setting apart of life for the ministry. Along with the order of worship that should carry all to a new departure in the life of service to God, special guidance on the meaning of the pastoral ministry should come to the candidate for ordination. This should be a message that would carry the light of the candle of the Lord into the soul of the one being ordained. And the act of ordination should be the culmination of the worship of that hour.

Read one or more of the following scriptures: Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1: 4-19; Ezekiel 2; Matthew 9: 35-38; Ephesians 4: 11-16; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; 2 Timothy 2: 1-4; 2 Timothy 3: 15-17; 2 Timothy 4: 1-8; Titus 1: 5-9.

At the point where the ordination service is to begin, the presiding elder shall address the church:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, through the centuries

God has continued to call men to take on themselves the mantle of the ministry. Through these chosen ones God continues to bless the world with the riches of Christ. And to the church God has given commandment to pray for the increase of the ministry, that the kingdoms of evil in this world might be shattered, and the Kingdom of love established. Those who are thus bound to the service of God through the church must increasingly be men of study, prayer, good life, and good works, men who can by life and by word enrich and strengthen the Body of Christ in the things of the Spirit and in the values that cannot be shaken. It is fitting that anyone called to this high office should have the approval of the church and the prayers of the church. Under the guidance of God's Spirit we have met to set apart for the pastoral ministry this brother (these brethren) in the faith.

This, the church, having all confidence in the Christian conviction and experience, the sincerity of purpose, the integrity of character, the gifts of mind and spirit, has according to the practice of the Church of the Brethren, called to the sacred office of the Christian ministry.

At this point the candidate (or candidates) shall come and stand before the worship center — the presiding elder in front of him and between him and the worship center. He shall then require of him the taking of vows of consecration and ordination.

Do you declare anew your commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to keep a daily spiritual discipline of Bible study, spiritual reading, prayer, and meditation?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to be a servant of God in whom Christ is seen to live again?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to carry out faithfully the obligations of the pastoral ministry such as: teaching the Word; preaching to the age in which you live; visiting the sick; seeking the lost, confused, and broken; comforting the troubled and distressed; guiding and training the young for membership in the Body of Christ; preparing all the members under your care for the vocation of peace; and fitting young people for Christian marriage and family life?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to labor for the unity, peace, and growth of the church, and for the increase of her ministries of love and redemptive compassion?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose, God's grace helping you, to interpret in a creative manner the faith and practice of the New Testament?

Candidate: I do.

At this point the elder presiding will ask the candidate with his wife to kneel before the worship center. The elders standing behind them and facing the worship center with them will proceed with the laying on of hands and the prayer (or prayers) of consecration. These should be specially prepared. At the conclusion of the dedicatory prayer the elder-in-charge will have the candidate rise and remain facing the worship center. Then he shall say to him:

Brother, God has led you to this hour of consecration for the pastoral ministry. You cannot go far unless you faithfully rely upon Him for guidance and strength. God alone can make you a good minister of Jesus Christ, one in whom Christ is seen to live again. And the only failure in the ministry is to fail at this point. God has made you to live in a time of great spiritual poverty, need, and hunger. May it ever be that people will find in you the grace of God that shone in the face of our Savior. And to you, his companion in this work of God, may God gird you with such grace of spirit, and such loveliness of life, that you may not only encourage and release the best in your husband, but that you

may kindle in the hearts of the women and girls in the parish a deep desire for all of the virtues of Christian womanhood.

And now, as you stand before this lighted worship center, in the name of the church I present to you this copy of the Bible. This is the Book out of which a living word of God to your people can come. Live with it until its truth lives in you.

In the name of the church, I give you this manual of parish procedure and prayer; this will give you guidance in the affairs of a pastoral program and also nurture your life in the springs of vital prayer. Live with it until its directions become the spirit and purpose of your life.

In the name of the church, I present you this church hymnal, the lyric voice of vital worship and experience with God. Live with it until your heart sings with the glorious joys of the redeemed.

And now the elder presiding shall turn to the assembled church and call for the members to repeat after him their own vows of undergirding the work of the one ordained, and the ministry of the church.

We then, the members of this Body of Christ, rejoice with you upon your entrance into the pastoral ministry. We join with you in renewing our commitment to the cause of Christ, and of discovering more perfectly the meaning of discipleship. And with God's help, we shall evermore uphold you in our prayers, encourage you by our love, strengthen you by our fellowship, and work with you for the increase of the church, and the exaltation of the life of peace, in the church, and in the world. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then the candidate shall retire to a front pew. While the organist plays quiet music—great hymns of the faith—representatives from various units of the church organization shall come forward and extend the right hand of fellowship and love. The service may be concluded with a forward-looking hymn and a benediction.

*Prayers for the Use of One Preparing for Ordination*⁵⁴

Our Father:

Whose will guides those who humbly seek Thee,
Whose purpose of righteousness endures through the ages in the
face of all evil:
Whose patience comforts us when we falter and rebukes us
when we are restless,
Whose love enfolds all men as Thy children, and in whose
presence is light and joy;

Grant

That I may find my greatest joy in my daily walk with Thee,
That I may show my loyalty to Thee in the face of all
uncertainties,
That I may be moved to greater ventures of faith as I learn the
way of the cross,
And that I may always be mindful of the courageous,
compassionate Christ.

In asking these blessings I pledge myself to unflinching discipleship
to Him in whose name I pray. Amen.

Almighty God, grant unto me purity of heart, openness of
mind and strength of purpose, that I may know Thy will and
faithfully do it. In Thy light may I see light and in Thy service
find joy and peace. Amen.

O Thou who hast set me in this blessed fellowship of love and
hope, of work and worship, grant that I may be made equal to
whatever Thou mayest ask me to do, or be, or bear. Amen.

O God, who canst make me glad and strong in the service of
Thy house, may the blessing Thou waitest to bestow be not missed
because of any unrighteousness of life; may it rather, by Thy mercy,
abide in the sanctuary of my heart to the good of men and to Thy
glory. So guide me now and govern me always by Thy Holy Spirit
that I may never forget Thee, but may ever serve Thee with a life
which shall show forth Thy praise. Amen.

O God, who groweth not old from day to day or from age to
age, but in whom the spirit of creativity is eternally new, give me
the spirit of the Pilgrim, that I may walk into the future . . . bravely
and eagerly, because my life is staid on Thee. Amen.

⁵⁴ Goodwin, *op. cit.*

ORDAINING ELDERS

Authority for and Method of Ordaining (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1890 and 1927)

1. The authority to ordain elders shall be vested in the elders of the State Districts.

2. The elders assembled at District Meeting shall consult as to the ordination of all elders, to be effected in the District. If the majority of the elders decide that the ordination should be made [the matter shall be referred to the district ministerial board to have in charge the ordination of ministers to the eldership approved by the elders of the Districts] who shall go to the church and, in council with it if they find no Gospel objections, the ordination shall be made.

3. The necessity of ordaining elders may originate with the officers of the church or the elders of the District.

Special Sermon at Ordination (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1917)

The duties of the minister to the church, and in general, also the duties of the church to the minister, shall be clearly set forth in a special sermon at the time of installation and ordination.

Qualifications (See qualifications of licensed preachers, page 124.)

Duties and Responsibilities (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1917)

The duties of the elder, in addition to the foregoing duties of the minister, are to feed the flock, to preside over council meetings, especially when official members are on trial, to anoint the sick, to have the oversight and general management of the church; in brief, to be a faithful shepherd to the flock, guarding their souls as one that must give an account, and be willing to serve in any capacity authorized by the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14).

When the minister proves himself faithful and efficient in his office, he shall be ordained elder; and when ordained, he shall pledge himself to live and labor in harmony with the accepted standards of the church in faith and doctrine and practice (1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:3).

Form to Be Used in Ordaining Elders (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1919)

Read one or several of the follow scriptures: Acts 20:18-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 14:23.

In the Church of the Brethren, the ministry is regarded as functioning on three levels, each one representing a new stage of spiritual maturity and leadership responsibility. That of licentiate is exploratory—looking toward a full confirmation of God's call to

be a minister of Jesus Christ. The second level is the full pastoral ministry, and marks the response of the candidate to the prevailing urge of the Holy Spirit. The third level, the eldership, comes when the minister has proved himself, in the practical affairs of the church and of the spiritual life, to be worthy of larger responsibilities. Ordination means that the individual has a vital, creative, dynamic spiritual life, that he bears the marks of the living Lord upon his life. This honor of the church should be a kind of crowning event in the life of a minister, should call forth new devotion to Christ's cause, release new powers and energies for the larger ministry now assigned. The ordination service may well be preceded by a spiritual retreat of at least ten days at some suitable spiritual-life center, where the minister may prepare his heart and mind for this deeper commitment. The service of ordination should become a high hour in the worship experience of the local church, with delegations from near-by churches also being present. The whole service should be built around the principle and meaning of ordination to the eldership. The aim is to give the honored minister the vision of the larger task to which he is being consecrated, and also to make this meaning concrete and vivid to the assembled church, for the act lays upon the church new obligations to God also. It would be well for the actual ordination symbolism and charge to come as the concluding act of worship.

At the point at which the ordination act begins, the presiding elder shall address the church:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, God desires that His servants should take on themselves ever anew duties and assignments in the work of the church. And by His Holy Spirit, God directs the church to lay upon faithful and efficient ministers the administrative responsibility involved in the eldership. It is with joy in our hearts that we enter into this high hour of the church's practice.

This, the [name of church], recognizing the faithfulness of our brother in the ministry, his continuing growth in spiritual fervor, insight, and love, and his deep passion to build up the total life of the church, in likeness to the mind and spirit of our Savior Jesus Christ, has, according to the practice of the Church of the Brethren,

requested that Brother and Sister be ordained to the sacred office of elder.

Here the minister to be ordained, with his wife, will be called to stand in the chancel of the church before the worship center. The presiding elder will stand between them and the worship center. Then he shall say:

Do you re-affirm your commitment to the ministry and to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to press on into the deeper meanings of life in and with God?

Candidate: I do.

Do you purpose to stand for, live, and faithfully interpret the teachings of the New Testament, and to show creatively and vitally their relevance to life?

Candidate: I do.

Do you willingly accept this larger responsibility in the ministry as a call from God, and out of a desire to be one in whom Christ is seen to live again?

Candidate: I do.

Do you promise to be more diligent and persistent in the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, meditation, and prayer, by which the man of God is equipped for every good work in the church and in the world, to the glory of God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Candidate: I do.

At this point the brother and his wife will kneel before the worship center and the elders will lay hands upon them and offer a prayer or prayers of consecration. The organist could give a soft and quiet background with the hymn, *My Life, My Love*, or some other appropriate hymn, during the prayer, if desired.

At the conclusion of the prayer the brother and sister will stand, still facing the worship center, and the elder will address them as follows:

Brother and sister in the Lord: You have thus far labored together in the ministry, and because of your

faithfulness in God's work you have been given this new field of labor. You are under the divine command of our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach and teach, to feed the flock, to perform all the ordinances of the church, to comfort and anoint the sick, to direct the affairs of the church when chosen as presiding elder, to find and direct younger men into the ministry, to find other youth who can serve in the cause of Christian compassion, witness, and education. And, above all, as the true servant of God you must labor for the unity and peace of the church in this world. May God give you grace to carry on in this ministry of labor, love, and intercession in behalf of his people. And may the Holy Spirit enable you to strengthen each other in the responsibilities that each of you shall bear.

The elder turning now to the church shall call upon all to stand and repeat after him the commitment of encouragement:

We, the members of this congregation, rejoice with you in your ordination. We rededicate ourselves to Christ and His church. We renew our baptismal vows, and, with God's grace helping us, hope to rise to new heights of Christian living. In the spirit of our Master, we pledge to you our help, prayers, and love, that together the bond of Christian fellowship may be strengthened, and by our united witness souls may be born into the Kingdom, and God, being seen in us, may be glorified. God grant, that helping and being helped, loving and being loved, serving and being served, we may know that peace that passes understanding, and which alone can heal the wounds of the world. Amen.

A fitting practice is then to seat the congregation while the organist plays very softly great hymns of the faith. The elder may invite the members of the church to come forward and extend the hand of fellowship and love to the brother and sister. A fitting hymn of dedication and the benediction will conclude the service.

It is deemed wise that in all cases where church officials are married after their installation or ordination, their wives shall be

installed into their respective offices at an early and convenient opportunity.

*Prayers for Use of Those to Be Ordained*⁵⁵

Deliver me, O God, from the hypocrisy which exhorts others to sacrifice while holding fast to one's own possessions. Help me to depend more upon the clear illustration of example than the eloquence of words, to trust in the promise of Jesus that He will draw all men to him if we will exalt him in our lives. Help me to conquer the temptation to want comfort and compliment and compensation for everything I do. Help me to give and not count the cost, to fight and not heed the wounds, to serve in singleness of heart Thy Kingdom, and trust Thee for results. Amen.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the temptation to measure myself and my work by the false standards of worldly success or approval. Lead me through the forms of Christian living into the spirit of it. It is not enough that I am a member of a holy calling. It is not enough that I mean well by what I do, or that I seek no advantage over others. It is not enough that I mouth the words of the Gospel itself. Let that mind be in me which was in Christ Jesus, who set no store by position, or honor, or outward appearance, but humbled himself, and became the servant of all men. Show me what I should do, and be, to fulfill Thy purpose for me, day by day, and make me a good minister of Jesus Christ, I pray Thee. Amen.

Father, I thank Thee for the privilege of being a minister of Jesus Christ in this parish. Help me to minister in His spirit. Forgive the human weakness and sin which impair my witness. Cleanse my heart of all self-interest, that I may never confuse my selfish desires with Thy great purpose for me and for Thy people. Give me gentle strength, humble courage, creative goodwill, and uncompromising integrity. Make me slow to criticize and quick to forgive others, but stern in self-discipline. Let me not think of myself more highly than I ought to think, nor despise the abilities and opportunities which Thou hast given me. I am only a child in Thy sight; but I am Thy child. Guide me in Thy way, through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.

Father, help me to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, understanding both good and evil in the human heart; patient and forgiving with the sinner, while helping him to hate sin; never

⁵⁵ Goodwin, *op. cit.*

keeping silent from fear, never speaking from irritation or wounded pride. Teach me not only what to say, but when to speak and when to keep silent. Help me to be a good listener, and a discerning observer, and teach me when to refrain from noticing. Help me to be the kind of friend men, women and children will gladly seek. Show me when to invite their confidence, and when to wait prayerfully for them to make the first advance. In all my ministry, help me to direct their thoughts and trust to Thee, rather than to myself, for it is Thy wisdom and power and love that save, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

D. *Consecrating Deacons*

THE TEMPORARY OFFICE OF DEACON

A Form for the Consecration Service

At the point in the service where the deacon or deacons are to be consecrated to their task, the elder-in-charge shall say to the brother and his companion who are before the worship center:

Brother (and sister) in the Lord: The church from the very beginning of its history has sought out those who could lead the church in her ministries to the poor, the sick, and the delinquent, and at the same time contribute to the spiritual warmth and fervor of the congregation. This work calls for men and women who are consecrated, alert to spiritual needs and opportunities, in the church and beyond the church, and who are living examples of what it means to be a mature person in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church in the spirit of prayer has called you to the office of deacon for a probationary period (1 Timothy 3:10). Your status is similar to that of the licentiate in the ministry. This period of service to which you are called is worthy of your best, and we believe you will be a real help in the church's ministries of compassion, and in looking after the material arrangements for church ordinances, and in giving good counsel for the church program in general.

Therefore, will you at this time take the vows of this office:

Brother (and Sister), do you willingly accept the office and work of deacon as a call from God to serve?

Candidate: I do.

Will you labor with all members in the church in the spirit of love and helpfulness?

Candidate: I will.

Do you promise to be faithful in the work of the church, and to strive for the unity and growth of the church?

Candidate: I do.

Will you practice the disciplines of devotion, such as prayer, Bible reading, faithful attendance at worship services, and visitation of the sick, shut-in, and delinquent members?

Candidate: I will.

At this point the elder will ask them to kneel with him before the worship center—the congregation kneeling facing the center too; then the elder shall lead in a prayer of consecration. At the close of the prayer the elder shall address the congregation:

Brothers and sisters of the church, you have called these to serve the church in the office of deacon. Their work will be made easy or difficult by your response to them. Do you on this day welcome them as deacons?

People: We do.

Do you pledge to them your prayers, helpfulness, and co-operation in the things that pertain to the church's work and witness?

People: We do.

Then shall the elder say:

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we declare Brother and Sister to be installed deacons in this congregation—for a probationary period looking toward the time when they will be installed into the life office. May God bless them in their work with the people of this fellowship. Amen.

The service may be closed with a hymn and a benediction.

THE PERMANENT OFFICE OF DEACON

See the Annual Meeting minutes of 1919, 1935, and 1942.

The church of the first century, in both its program and its organization, sensed the importance of providing for worthy spiritual servants called deacons (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

The need for such servants is just as great now. Our problems may be different in form but they demand in those who handle them the same moral and spiritual virility. A re-evaluation of the office and work of the deacon is quite essential.

In thinking of the spiritual implications of deacons' work, we should first of all think of it as a means to higher spiritual attainments.

Jesus taught His followers to think of God and to address Him in prayer as *our Father* and to think and speak of themselves in terms of *our*, *us*, and *we*, indicating the Father's children. This makes God our Father and all His followers brothers and sisters in the highest sense, constituting a divine family whose Father is God. This relationship naturally creates a mutual and spiritual interest in one another as individuals and the family as a whole. Our interests should, above all, be centered in the honor, welfare, and influence of the Father's family, in which the deacons function as administrators, providing for its spiritual welfare.

The early church recognized this family relationship and none said that "aught of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32) and used them as a family. As the work enlarged they appointed administrators to direct the distribution of their possessions as the need required (Acts 6:1-6). These men were called deacons and were chosen because of their special fitness for their work. Their ministrations were directed so as to preserve the spiritual unity and influence of the believers.

Jesus gave instructions in the preservation of these values. In case a brother sins against another, thereby bringing reproach upon himself and the church, the offending brother's redemption is to be sought earnestly. If the effort fails, then he is to be put away from the church so as to preserve her purity and influence. The church is a holy institution and her purity must be preserved by reforming the sinner or by removing him from it (Matthew 18). This work is practical and highly spiritual and the deacon needs divine wisdom to function properly in this needy field (Galatians 6:1).

In making physical arrangements for baptism and in assisting

applicants the deacon, whenever practical, should also assist the new members to become established spiritually in the church and her services. The physical should be used as a means to spiritual ends.

Likewise in providing for the communion services, the spiritual enrichment of the participants and the honor and glory of God should receive first consideration. Methods and forms that may have a tendency to detract from these important spiritual values should not be used. The human physical element during these services should be reduced to the minimum.

The ultimate aim of all of the deacon's work should be to develop the spiritual lives of individual members and to preserve the spirituality and purity of the church that she may be the light of the world. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was a deacon and brought honor to the office by his zeal for the work of Christ and by faithfully upholding the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom.

The office of deacon carries with it both responsibility and reward; for "they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Qualifications

(Annual Meeting Minutes, 1919)

The office of deacon is a worthy one and merits faithful and conscientious service. Brethren chosen as deacons should be faithful and loyal to the church, sincere and spiritually minded, with wisdom and judgment in all the work of the church (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-9). The wives of deacons should likewise be examples in their Christian virtues.

Electing, Organizing, and Perpetuating the Deacon Board

Annual Conference provides that in the election of deacons the ballot system be allowed, provided that the ballots are prepared in private and counted in private by brethren in charge of the election only (*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings, 1778-1922*, page 70).

The term of office of a deacon is to be for life or until such a time as he may disqualify himself by lack of diligence, faithfulness, loyalty, morality, or efficiency. For procedure in such cases see *Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings, 1778-1922*, page 90. Since the office is sacred and important, a period of not less than one to three years shall be required in which the deacon may prove himself faithful in service (1 Timothy 3:10).

(Annual Conference Minutes, 1942)

(1) The size and the location of the congregation should determine the number of active members on the board.

(3) At the age of seventy, deacons may be retired from active duties and younger men should be selected to fill up the active personnel. The retired men may still be used in an advisory capacity.

(4) When a deacon moves into the bounds of another congregation, his service as a deacon in the new location shall be determined by a ballot vote of the congregation. The official board shall determine the time of this vote and prepare for it.

(5) If, for any reason, the deacon board has lost its place and influence in the congregation, a plan for revitalization should immediately be attempted, in harmony with this form.

(6) The deacon board should organize by electing a chairman and a secretary for a term of three years. The chairman should be chosen because of his spirituality and his administrative ability. The secretary should know how to record minutes and keep records.

(7) Regular meetings should be held by the deacon board. The officers should prepare an agenda for the meeting. Any member of the congregation has the privilege of presenting in writing, with signature attached, any matter deemed helpful to the work.

(9) That there be instituted in each region and district a series of institutes for the purpose of educating and training in the functions of the deacon's office.

Duties of the Deacon

(1) Since young men of good character, possessing executive ability and financial management, will be members of the deacon board, congregations choosing members for trustees and finance committees should make some of their selections from this board.

(2) The deacon board should be charged with arranging the physical equipment when the rites of baptism, love feast and communion are to be observed. They should have in mind the spiritual nature of these services. When requested by the minister, deacons may assist in performing these rites.

(3) They may be used by the minister to perform the annual visit, to bring aid and encouragement to the sick and the invalids, to assist in the anointing service, or do the anointing in their own right when no ministers are available and the case is urgent, to see that individuals or families suffering the lack of material necessities are not neglected, to aid in restoring those who have grown indifferent to active fellowship, to assist in promoting a healthy program of evangelism, to fill the pulpit at the request of the minister in his absence.

(4) They shall be the agency for implementing in the congregation the program of the Brethren Service Committee both in regard to service and the procuring of funds for the support of the same.

A Form for the Installation of Deaco...

See the Annual Meeting minutes for 1919, 1935, 1942, and 1943.

At the time of election, a deacon shall be received according to the order of service as given in the report of 1919, *Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings, 1778-1922*, pages 88 and 89. When the church decides to install him, it shall be done by a consecration

prayer and the laying on of hands (*Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1923-1944*, page 115).

In the service of installation, the following passages may be read: Acts 6:1-10; 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

On the day on which deacons are inducted into office — either temporary or for life—the entire worship service should be given over to this consecration to special work in the life of the church. A fitting sermon or meditation should be given on the meaning of the office of deacon. And the concluding part of the service should be the consecration of life to this work. At that time the officiating elder shall say to the church:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, the Holy Spirit has directed the church from the very beginning, and up to this present hour, to separate men to look after the temporal interests of the church, and to labor for the spiritual unity and growth of the members of Christ's Body. These servants are called deacons. Brethren who are called to this service must be faithful and loyal to the church, spiritually minded, and possess wisdom and discreet judgment in dealing with the affairs of the church. Their wives should also abound in these Christian graces and virtues. The church, having full confidence in the faithfulness, loyalty, wisdom, and spiritual integrity of Brother and Sister, has, according to the practice of the Church of the Brethren, called them to the office of deacon.

Here the brother and sister shall stand before the elder at the worship center and answer the questions of commitment and receive their charges.

Forasmuch as you have, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, declared your willingness to take this office upon you, I now in the name of the Lord, require that you answer the following questions:

Do you declare anew your faith in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Candidates: I do.

Do you purpose to cultivate more fervently the spiritual life, by Bible reading, meditation, prayer, and Christian witnessing?

Candidates: I do.

Do you purpose to encourage and lead the church in deepening the spiritual life, and in her ministries of compassion?

Candidates: I do.

Do you purpose to be consistent in setting a good example in faith and conduct?

Candidates: I do.

Do you then accept the office of deacon in this Body of Christ, and promise to perform faithfully all the duties thereof?

Candidates: I do.

Then the brother and sister shall kneel at the worship center while the elders lay hands on them and pray. At the conclusion of the consecration prayer, and after the brother and sister have risen, the officiating elder shall say to them:

In the name of our Lord Jesus, you are now set apart in the sacred office of deacon.

Then shall the elder call on the whole church to rise and repeat after him the following:

We, the members of this Body of Christ, in the spirit of joy, and in renewed loyalty to our Lord, acknowledge and receive you as deacons, and promise to give you all the honor and support to which your office entitles you. We, with God's help, offer you our confidence, encouragement, co-operation, and prayers, that together we may increase in the knowledge and love of God, as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

While the people sit in quiet meditation as the organist plays softly great hymns of the faith, representatives of the various organizations of the church may come forward and extend the hand of Christian love and fellowship to the newly installed deacons. The service may then be concluded with a hymn and a benediction.

E. *Installing a Pastor*

After the usual devotional period, a sermon should be delivered by a member of the district ministerial board or another chosen for this important service, setting forth the duties and responsibilities of both the pastor and the church. Such texts as the following could be used: Isaiah 6:8-9; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Matthew 9:36-38; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18-19; John 10:1-18; John 21:15-17; Acts 10:42; Acts 13:2; Acts 20:17-35; Romans 1:14-16; Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:7; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 1 Timothy 6:3-14; 2 Timothy 2:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5.

After the presentation of the message, the following service of installation should take place:

The induction of a minister as pastor of a church is of such significance as to require the most careful planning and direction. The service itself should be a time of spiritual refreshing and renewal for the church and the minister. It should be a day for the resetting of the spiritual compass of the church—a time when the whole church is led to a new plateau of affirmation and commitment to the gospel of God. The sermon for the occasion should aim at that. At the close of the message, the act of induction should begin, guided by one who has prepared himself for this priestly act—for he is actually the channel through which the church and the newly called minister are offering up their lives to the service of God anew.

A FORM FOR THE INSTALLATION SERVICE

One or more of these opening sentences may be read:

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that the church might be presented before him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing

one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever.

After the reading of the opening sentence the minister shall say:

Let us pray:

Eternal God, who hast built Thy church upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, and who hast called us and savest us with a holy calling, by Thy purpose and grace in the Lord Jesus, by Thy Holy Spirit cleanse our hearts, enlighten our minds, strengthen our faith, that we may surrender our lives to Thee anew, and obey and glorify Thy name through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The leader of the induction service may then read one or more of the following short scriptures: Matthew 28: 18-20; Romans 10: 6-17; 2 Corinthians 4; Ephesians 4: 1-13; 2 Timothy 4: 1-8; 1 Peter 5: 1-4; John 10: 1-16; John 21: 15-17; Isaiah 6: 1-8. At the close of the reading he may say:

In the name of the Lord Jesus, the Head of the church, who has given unto men gifts for the ministry of His Word, truth, and life, we meet together, in order that the members of this church, having called Brother to labor in the gospel among them, may now with us appoint him as pastor of this church and congregation. Let the church declare how under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with earnest prayer the call to be pastor was given to our brother.

Let the church's representative now give a statement concerning the call.

Then let the minister called respond with a brief statement of his response to the call.

The Vows of the Pastor

Then the presiding minister shall address the minister-elect, who, with his wife will stand before the worship center, the presiding minister between them and it.

Brother, seeing that God has called you into this ministry, and that this church has been led to invite you to become its pastor and leader, and that we are about to commit to you this charge, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I ask you:

Question: Do you re-affirm your faith in the gospel of Christ as the hope of the world?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you purpose to live by and teach the faith of the New Testament?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you purpose to maintain a daily discipline of prayer, Bible reading, and study that your ministry may be kept creative and alive?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you believe in your heart that God has called you to the pastoral oversight of this church?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you promise to be faithful in preaching the Word, in administering the sacraments, in intercessory prayer for each soul, in pastoral visitation and counseling, in living a godly life that adorns the doctrine of God in all you do?

Answer: I do.

The Charge to the Pastor

I charge you, therefore, Brother, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the

Word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. . . . Watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry (2 Timothy 4:1, 2, 5). May the Lord give unto you the Holy Spirit for the work and ministry of a pastor in this church, now committed unto you. Remember that you stir up the gift of God which is in you . . . for God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:6, 7).

The Vows of the Pastor's Wife

Brethren and sisters of the congregation, a word should be said about the place and work of the pastor's wife in the life of this local church. We recognize that she is very important in the work and welfare of this church. Her importance and her primary place of responsibility is first of all to be a good mother to her family and a genuine companion and helpmeet of her husband. We do not employ her. The help she gives to this church will be in her primary responsibilities to her family and in the countless unseen ministries in our midst. The time and service she can give to the church will always be deeply appreciated, but should not place a burden upon her energies and strength.

Question: Sister, will you ever, as the helpmeet of your husband, who is called as pastor of this church, seek to uphold and strengthen him through the ministry of the home, and the shared riches of your common spiritual family life?

Answer: I will.

Question: Will you ever seek to share with Christian grace and humility in the life of the church, as a true and devoted example to the women of the church? And will

you help them in their special problems, laboring for an increase in spiritual living in the homes and families of the church?

Answer: I will.

The Charge to the Pastor's Wife

I charge you, therefore, Sister, to be in all things the true spiritual helpmeet of your husband, who is the minister of this church and your minister; to be an example in the spiritual quality of your own personal life to the congregation; to maintain a home which shall be as a shining light of wholesome Christian family living in the parish. Taking Christ as Lord of your home and of your shared service in this church, maintain with your husband an altar of never-failing devotion, upon which the love of God, burning as a steady flame, may warm and light not only your home, but the homes and families of the church. And God will be your refuge and strength, bringing you power and peace and joy through all the years of your service.

The presiding minister shall then say:

Let us pray.

God of all grace and power, who dost ever give us the will to do that which is right, grant unto this Thy servant and his companion the strength and power to fulfill these commitments, that they may accomplish the work which Thou hast given them to do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Vows of the Congregation

At this point the minister shall call upon the congregation to stand and shall ask:

Question: Do you, the members of this church, rededicate yourselves to the cause of Christ, and purpose to take a new step forward in the Christian life?

Answer: We do.

Question: Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive as pastor of this church, promising him all due honor and support as he fulfills his ministry among you?

Answer: We do.

Question: Do you purpose to uphold him unceasingly by personal and corporate prayer, by faithful co-operation, by regular attendance at worship, by earnest witnessing, and by the practice of the stewardship of time, talent, life, and substance for the work of the Kingdom?

Answer: We do.

Question: Do you purpose to seek his counsel and help in times of spiritual crisis, sickness, and trouble?

Answer: We do.

Question: Do you purpose to labor with him solely for the glory of God in the church and in the world?

Answer: We do.

The Charge to the Church

Brethren and sisters, you have called Brother to be your pastor. He has accepted the call and received the charge. It is your duty now to give him loyal support. You should pray for him earnestly and regularly and be ready always to help him in every way you can. While he ministers to you in spiritual things, you should be diligent to minister to him in temporal things, remembering at the same time that he also needs spiritual comfort from you. It is your duty, as much as lies in your power, to enable him to carry on most efficiently his service as pastor.

Let us pray:

Living God, Thou hast the words of life, and hast led Thy servants to make the vows that bear fruit unto eternal life. Enable them never to forget these moments, and fortify them with power to live out what they have said, and thus

to continue fruitful in every good work; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Conclusion

Here may be sung, while everyone remains standing, a great hymn like *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*, or *Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove*, or *Breathe Upon Us, Holy Spirit*. At the conclusion will come the induction prayer.

Father, all-gracious and all-glorious, in whose will is our peace, and without whose grace all human efforts are vain and fail, bless Thy servant to whom the care of these souls is now committed. Pour out Thy Holy Spirit upon him, that he may fulfill all his sacred duties with faithfulness, courage, and diligence. Grant him the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Make his ministry to be the means of awakening the indifferent, encouraging the faithful, fortifying the troubled and the sick, and of bringing the lost to their home in Thee. Keep him strong to defend all that is in accord with Thy will. Keep him pure in heart, and fervent in spirit. And grant that day by day his people may discern in him Christ living again in the flesh.

Make him to be a tower of strength to his people, and make them to be a bulwark of strength to him. Enlarge their souls through his ministry, and together lead them in the service of Christ's love to all; through our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

All may unite in the Lord's Prayer following the induction prayer.

Then the presiding minister shall say:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on behalf of this church, we declare you pastor of this congregation. The God of all grace, who has called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and comfort you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

While the congregation remains seated, a representative of the church shall present to the pastor a key to the church and a Bible or some classic on the pastoral ministry.

Then a brief charge is given to the minister by one appointed and one is given to the church, a hymn is sung, and the newly appointed pastor gives the benediction.

F. *Installing a Moderator of a Church*

TERM OF OFFICE OF PRESIDING ELDERS

The Annual Meeting minutes, 1917, say that "churches should elect their presiding elders at least once in three years."

For further information concerning elders, consult *Revised Minutes of the Annual Meeting, 1778-1922*, pages 78 to 87.

A FORM FOR THE INSTALLATION SERVICE

This service may be conducted by the district commission on the ministry, or by others appointed by them to do the work, or by the retiring moderator of the church. The service should be by all means a full congregational meeting.

Organ Prelude

(There may be a processional of choir members and those to take part in the service.)

Call to worship (minister and people)

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

Minister: O Lord, open Thou our lips.

People: And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

Minister: Praise ye the Lord.

People: The Lord's name be praised.

Hymn of Praise and Adoration

Prayer (minister and people uniting)

O God, who givest to the church the grace of prayer, and who hast made the church to be the channel of Thy blessing to the generations, and who through the glorious life and living presence of Thy Son our Lord dost raise up men and women through whom the witness of the church is purified, enlarged, and enhanced, we praise Thee for our priceless heritage of life in Christ, and for those noble

torchbearers who have passed the light on to us. Thou never failest to raise up persons who can direct the church into the ways of life, peace, and love. We thank Thee for this occasion which calls us anew to prayer and consecration. Grant that with the one who is to be installed as moderator of our fellowship we shall be united in consecration, so that from this day on we will work for the increase of the church and the glory of Thy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Choral Response

Chosen Scriptures (on the character and office of a moderator)

Address or Sermon (on the office of moderator in the local church)

Hymn of Aspiration

The Service of Induction

At this point the leader shall say to the congregation:

Brother and sisters in the Lord, God continues to call men and women by His Holy Spirit to supervise, counsel, and guide the church in the affairs of its ministry and witness. We are ever to pray for leaders of proved wisdom, discreet judgment, good conduct, and Christian love. And it is proper that the church be led in its common concerns by one in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, one who will lead, not rule, and so encourage the total church to labor for the glory of God. It is right that this one be a brother to his fellow laborers in Christ's vineyard. This congregation has in the spirit of prayer chosen Brother to be the counselor, leader, and moderator of the church in the affairs which belong to that office.

At this point the leader of the meeting will ask the person to be inducted into the office of moderator to stand before the worship center, and he shall say to him:

Brother, do you, trusting in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has called you to this office of moderator, promise to give yourself faithfully to this work,

to exercise patience and brotherly love, and to labor at all times for the unity of the church?

Moderator-elect: I do.

Do you purpose to serve God through the moderatorship of this church, and ever to be in prayer for the membership, that the church may be without spot or blemish, and in truth a miniature expression of the Kingdom of God on earth?

Moderator-elect: I do.

Then shall the acting moderator give a Scriptural charge to the moderator-elect.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago.

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his."

The moderator will then call upon all present to kneel with him and the moderator-elect—the congregation facing the worship center; then shall he offer a prayer of consecration such as the following or as he may be led:

Holy God, Thou God of Peace, Thou who makest men to be brothers and who makest the church to be a family of the Spirit, Thou hast never left Thy world without true and faithful witnesses to Thyself. Speak now, by Thy Spirit, to

every heart the needed word, a word that will abide with us and fulfill Thy will in us. Grant to each person, and to him who is called to the office of moderator, a new portion of Thy Spirit. And place upon our brother the mantle of Thy wisdom and love as it is in Christ, that he may be able to carry out the work assigned him. Enable him and us, united in Christian love and labor, ever to be governed by Thy holy will, that our work, begun and ended in Thee, may bring Thee praise. Through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Upon rising from prayer the officiating minister will say to the congregation:

Do you accept now Brother as the moderator of your church?

People: We do.

Do you promise to labor with him for the increase of the church, her effective witness, and efficiency, to the glory of God?

People: We do.

Do you promise to undergird him with your prayers, co-operation, and encouragement, that Christ may be all in all, and that you may live as children of the light in this dark world?

People: We do.

The acting moderator then shall speak to the one being inducted into office after this fashion:

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are inducted into the office of moderator of this Church of the Brethren. May the grace of Him who called you uphold and direct you in the work of this fellowship of Christ. Amen.

Anthem or Hymn of Praise

Benediction and Choral Response

Organ Postlude

G. *Recognition and Consecration of Church School Workers and Teachers*

A FORM FOR THE CONSECRATION SERVICE⁵⁶

This sacrament of dedication may precede the sermon or follow it; or it may become the entire observance of the hour. Scriptures which may be appropriate are: Luke 2:41-52; 2 Timothy 2:1-15.

Then the minister may use the following or other words:

Fellow workers in the church of Christ: You have been called to teach and lead in the educational work of the church. This is an important task. Upon you is laid the responsibility of guiding and inspiring boys and girls, men and women in the love of God and in the service of Christ. In this, you are co-laborers with Christ, and carriers of the light along with those many noble souls of other generations. By your words and lives you will leave marks upon these with whom you labor. I, therefore, call upon you to be faithful and persevering in this assignment from God, keeping in mind always that you are not only to give information, but you are to awaken souls to their need of God, and by patience and gentleness win them to the Kingdom of God and of Christ, and, further to enable them by proper nurture to grow in the grace and stature of the Lord Jesus.

Inasmuch then as you have been given this ministry of teaching in the church, will you endeavor with God's help to fulfill the duties of your office? Will you be diligent in Bible study, reading the most helpful books, and be regular in attendance at church and school? And will you seek the means of personal growth by which you may ever influence your pupils to loyalty to Jesus and His cause?

Response of Teachers and Officers (in unison): Trusting in God for strength and in loyalty to Christ we promise that we will be faithful in our assignments as workers in this church school. We will strive to be regular in attendance, careful in preparation for our work, loyal to the principles and program of our church school, constant

⁵⁶ Adapted from *The Minister's Service Book*, by Morrison. Used by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

in prayer, faithful in visiting these in our charge. By living worthy examples of the Christian life, at all times and in all ways we will seek to guide the development of the Christian character of these in our care.

The minister will then call upon the parents of the children in the church school to stand, and will say as follows or in his own words:

The duty and responsibility of guiding children and young people in the Christian way is not alone the task of these teachers. Their best efforts will fail unless you in your home life wholeheartedly support and encourage them in their work. Your homes must have an atmosphere which provides the conditions for spiritual life and growth. Recognizing that the primary responsibility for the Christian upbringing of your children rests with you, will you now join these teachers and officers in rededicating yourselves to God and to this task and its fulfillment?

Response of Congregation (in unison): Trusting in God for help, and in devotion to Christ, we promise that we will be faithful in our responsibility as parents and as members of this church school. We will endeavor to be regular in attendance at worship and at the church school; to labor with and encourage our children to prepare properly for church school experience; to be faithful in prayer for our children and their leaders; and to live out to the best of our ability the meaning of our Christian commitment.

Then the minister may call upon all members of the church school to stand, and will say as follows or in his own words:

Members of this school of Christ: Today your parents and teachers have renewed their commitment to God in your behalf. They want you to be men and women of God. They know that without God's help and your co-operation this can never happen. Will you now show your appreciation for what they seek to do for you by faithful attendance, by study of lesson assignments, by being true to the ideals of our church school, and by prayer for your teachers and parents, and by loyalty to Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior?

Response of Church School Members: Trusting in God for His guidance and following in the steps of Jesus, we will be regular in attendance, faithful in Bible and lesson study, often in prayer, and loyal to our church school and morning worship. And we will try at all times to live the way the Master directs.

Prayer of Consecration (by all):

Our Father, Thou who art the Living Teacher of our race, and who didst send into the world the Lord Jesus that we might learn more perfectly Thy holy will, and that we would grow in the discernment of Thy image in every man, woman, and child, we thank Thee for a teaching church, and for those who have been set apart by Thy Spirit for the ministry of teaching in the church. Equip them with wisdom, insight, patience, and love to fulfill Thy purpose in teaching. Inspire the children with responsive minds, alert spirits, and ready wills to hear and obey Thy truth as taught. Fortify the parents too, with the grace of Christian parenthood, that they may vitally influence their children to the imitation of Christ. To this end, we together offer our lives to Thee and to one another in the sacred work of teaching and learning. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Teacher's Prayer (by the minister, teachers, and officers):

Eternal God, Thou who art mighty in power yet tender in love, we humbly seek to teach the children of this church of Thy glory and Thy redemption. Too often we remember our weakness instead of Thy strength. We dwell under the shadow of our own frailties instead of teaching in the light of Thine all-sufficient promises.

Now we would dedicate ourselves to the task Thou hast laid upon us. May a new power, a greater skill, and a deeper love mark our teaching. Give us, dear Lord, an understanding of our pupils, a comprehension of their needs, and a revelation of Thy Holy Spirit.

Endow us with a joy in our work. Make us aware of Thy share in our endeavors. Lift us up, we beseech Thee,

that as teachers and pupils, ministers and officers, we may grow in Christian love. Hear our prayers offered in the name of the Great Teacher, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TEACHERS

We implore Thy blessing, O God, on all the men and women who teach the children and youth of our nation, for they are the potent friends and helpers of our homes. Into their hands we daily commit the dearest that we have, and as they make our children, so shall future years see them. Grant them an abiding consciousness that they are co-workers with Thee, Thou great teacher of humanity, and that Thou hast charged them with the holy duty of bringing forth from the budding life of the young the mysterious stores of character and ability which Thou hast hidden in them. Teach them to reverence the young lives, clean and plastic, which have newly come from Thee, and to realize that generations still unborn shall rue their sloth or rise to higher levels through their wisdom and faithfulness. Gird them for their task with Thy patience and tranquility, with a great fatherly and motherly love for the young, and with special tenderness for the backward and afflicted. Save them from physical exhaustion, from loneliness and discouragement, from the numbness of routine, and from all bitterness of heart.

We bless Thee for the free and noble spirit that is breathing with quickening power upon the educational life of our day, and for the men and women of large mind and loving heart who have made that spirit our common possession by their teaching and example. But grant that a higher obedience and self-restraint may grow in the new atmosphere of freedom. We remember with gratitude to Thee the godly teachers of our own youth who won our hearts to higher purposes by the sacred contagion of their life. May the strength and beauty of Christlike service still be plainly wrought in the lives of their successors, that our children may not want for strong models of devout manhood on whom their characters can be molded. Do Thou reward Thy servants with a glad sense of their own eternal worth as teachers of the race, and in the heat of the day do Thou show them the spring by the wayside that flows from the eternal silence of God and gives new light to the eyes of all who drink of it. Amen.—*Walter Rauschenbusch*⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Reprinted from Rauschenbusch's *Prayers of the Social Awakening* by permission of the Pilgrim Press.

A PRAYER FOR TEACHERS

O God, Revealer of all truth, Source of all beauty, Father of all, we look to Thee with adoration and praise, and with deep searching of heart. For the joy of being called to teach, for the truth like a flaming torch put into our hands to share, for the children who look up to us to learn, we thank Thee.

Give to us and all teachers, we beseech Thee, open and honest minds, hearts sensitive to Thy beauty and truth, compassion, and sensitivity to the wonder of growing minds. Hear our prayer for courage to live nobly and teach fearlessly. Grant us serenity of spirit that we may walk unhurried and unworried through each busy day. Fill our lives with the splendid gayety that springs from wholesome living. Keep us from blighting the fair flower of growing life by anger or pettiness. Preserve us from the stale dullness of a mind grown slack, which no longer wonders.

Make all teachers instruments of Thy peace, messengers of kindly and sharing love.

May Thy Kingdom come in the hearts of men, beginning with our classes. In the name and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord and Teacher we pray. Amen.—*Edward K. Ziegler*

H. *Installing Church Officers*

AN ORDER FOR THE INSTALLATION SERVICE

The minister in charge should read the list of officers-elect and the offices to which they have been elected. Then he shall address the officers standing before the worship center in the following manner:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, in the Church of the Brethren the responsibility for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom has always been in the hands of the laity. We believe this was true in the church from the beginning. The New Testament makes many references to those chosen to carry on certain work in the church. They were selected because of their love for God, wholesome life, sound judgment, and Christlikeness in spirit. In keeping with this first-century practice this church, trusting in the guidance

of the Holy Spirit, has chosen you to serve at various tasks in the life of the fellowship. It is the will of the church that you be installed into office at this time. At such a time as this, it is right to hear the words of the Scripture:

At this point the minister may read one or more of these scriptures or others which he may select.

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. . . .”

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes;

and I will keep it to the end.

Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law
and observe it with my whole heart.

Then shall the minister address those being inducted into office.

Fellow servants of Christ, the church has elected you to a place of service and responsibility. Your office is an honor and a privilege. It is an invitation to consecrate more of your life to Christ, and to strengthen His cause in the church and in the world. Therefore in response to the call of God through this congregation will you make your commitment in answer to the following questions.

Do you willingly accept the office to which you are assigned and promise to be faithful in all its duties?

Officers: We do.

Do you promise to live a life worthy of this entrustment, a life that radiates and exemplifies Christ in all you do?

Officers: We do.

Do you promise to be creative, redemptive, brotherly,

and co-operative with all others in the performance of your office?

Officers: We do.

Do you purpose to train yourself by prayer, meditation, Bible reading, study, and heart searching to be fit at all times for the responsibilities that shall be yours?

Officers: We do.

Then shall the minister say to the people, the people standing:

To you, the members of this church, I now present these brothers and sisters in the faith, fellow servants of our living Lord. They cannot be effective in their work without your help and support. Will you now by vow undergird them:

Do you receive these men and women as officers, leaders, and servants in the church?

People: We do.

Do you promise to give them your confidence, encouragement, and co-operation?

People: We do.

Will you uphold them by unceasing prayer and sincere response to their leadership?

People: We will.

The minister shall say:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, in whose will is our peace, and in whose service is the promise of life, grant that in our hearts we may today consecrate Christ as Lord in a new surrender, to the end that these Thy servants may have strength equal to their tasks, and that they may ever serve Thee with the church in joy, and know at all times the guidance and strengthening power of Thy Holy Spirit. Enable us to do together the things Thou hast for Thy church to do in this generation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the minister address the officers before him:

As a servant of the Lord Jesus along with you, in behalf of the church, I now declare you installed officers of this congregation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

The service may close with a hymn of fellowship and praise.

I. Receiving Members Into Church Fellowship

Fortunate is the church that is constantly receiving new members. New members should feel that they are to be a part of a friendly, happy fellowship of sincere followers of Christ. It is wise for the minister to have a personal interview with each applicant. The minister is the shepherd of souls and is anxious to learn of the spiritual condition of all who seek membership in the congregation. He will tactfully discover the applicant's sincerity, his knowledge of and faith in the gospel, and his desire to forsake sin and to be obedient to the Word of God, as understood and interpreted by the Church of the Brethren. He will give such instruction as seems necessary.

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF A CLASS IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

This service may be at the beginning of Advent or Lent and include such persons as will be in a class of instruction on the meaning of the Christian faith. The worship of the morning should be centered in the idea of training for discipleship. Following the sermon, as the minister reads the names of those entering the training class, these shall come and stand before the worship center. Then the minister shall say to the congregation:

The Christian life is not to be entered into without earnest study and prayer. There must be a counting of the cost. Membership in the Body of Christ is a high privilege and calls for depth of conviction and real strength of purpose to follow Christ. These who stand here desire to know what is required to be a follower of Jesus in this day. And it is with joy that we acknowledge their intent to

study the Christian faith before becoming members of Christ's Body.

The minister now stepping in front of those before the worship center shall address them:

Friends, you have made the decision to study the Christian faith because God has put this desire in your hearts. He wants each of us to be a worthy servant of His Son in this world. And our worthiness does not depend upon personal virtues, but upon the promise of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Our purpose in study shall be to learn to make fitting response to God, so that we may live as His children. That the church may know your purpose you will answer these questions:

Do you earnestly desire to learn what the Christian faith is?

Class Members: I do.

Do you purpose to study faithfully the New Testament and other lessons that may be assigned?

Class Members: I do.

Do you purpose to lead a life that God can approve?

Class Members: I do.

Do you purpose to be faithful in prayer, in public worship, and in good deeds?

Class Members: I do.

At this point the minister will join in prayer with the class and the congregation.

O God of peace, Thou who dost ever kindle in human hearts the desire to know Thee, to learn what Thy will is, and to take upon their lives the yoke of Christ, make this period of study for each of us a holy time, one filled with ever-new knowledge of Thee, and one of deepening joy and a sense of direction. Guide each person into a willingness to receive the mantle of Christ and to become faithful witnesses of His saving power. In His name. Amen.

The minister shall then say to the class:

We are learners with you in the school of Christ. We know that under the guidance of His Spirit we shall experience a time of refreshing and of kindling of fires of faith in our hearts. May God warm our hearts and illumine our minds to a free and full love of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Then the minister shall call upon the entire congregation to sing *Lo, a Gleam From Yonder Heaven* or some other fitting hymn, to be followed with the benediction.

RECEIVING MEMBERS BY BAPTISM

It is usual at the time of baptism to have each candidate make public confession of his faith, and to have it witnessed by the congregation. The sacrament of baptism is basically an observance for the whole fellowship. It should be a planned service in which each member renews his vows of dedication to God in Jesus Christ.

The Traditional Form

Part of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew is usually read. The applicant is asked if he will promise to follow the rule of the Master, in case of difference between himself and other members.

Then he is asked if he will agree to live according to the rules of the church and help in her deliberations, organization, and administration.

Three questions are asked of each applicant, either while he is kneeling in the water or before entering. If several are to be baptized it is effective to ask each applicant to assent to each question while they are seated or standing in a group. The questions should be worded so that the youngest may understand. According to the Conference of 1848 the questions are:

a. Dost thou believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He brought from heaven a saving gospel?

b. Dost thou willingly renounce Satan, with all his pernicious ways, and all the sinful pleasures of this world?

c. Dost thou covenant with God in Christ Jesus, to be faithful until death?

Or the questions may be phrased as follows:

a. Do you believe that Jesus is God's Son and do you receive Him and trust Him as your Savior?

b. Do you turn away from all sin and will you endeavor by God's grace to live according to the example and teachings of Jesus?

c. Will you be loyal to the church, upholding her by your prayers and your presence, your substance, and your service?

Then the minister shall say:

Upon this thy confession of faith which thou hast made before God and these witnesses, thou shalt, for the remission of thy sins, be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

After the third immersion the minister lays his hands on the applicant's head and prays (a) for the forgiveness of sins, and (b) for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38; Acts 8: 17; Acts 19: 5-6; Matthew 28: 18-19).

Then the minister may grip the hand of the applicant with a warm "God bless you" and assist him from the pool.

It is well to instruct an applicant as to just what to do while in the water. He should be as relaxed as possible, putting complete trust in the administrator. The applicant should kneel, sitting on his heels. With one hand holding the nostrils, the minister gently presses the applicant's body forward until it is completely immersed, saying, "I baptize thee into the name of the Father," etc. Quiet music between the immersions is effective.

Second Form (for Adults)

For adults baptism should be an experience so rich in meaning that it will never be forgotten. Let the whole service be so planned that the full significance is felt by the entire congregation. Baptism is a sacrament that the whole congregation should join in celebrating. It is an hour for the renewal of vows to God for the entire congregation, as well as for those who are taking the step for the first time. Following an ordered service of worship, in which the people participate in the reading of the Scriptures and in hymn singing and prayer, the minister shall enter the baptismal waters and facing the people shall say:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, our Savior sent forth His disciples to teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. There are those among us who desire to begin to be Christian. Let us pray for God's gracious and bounteous visitation upon their lives, that He may grant them the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, and enable them to attain the fullness of the stature of Christ. Let us pray:

Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the help of all who need Thee, the refuge of all who desire Thee, and the living source of the life of joy and victory which is in Thee, we acknowledge Thee as the One who can deliver us from every form of sin, and who can raise us up into newness of life. Grant that these who are to be baptized may be filled with Thy holy presence, that they may know the joyful release of life that follows surrender to Thee, that they may be blessed in body, mind, and spirit; that they may ever know the peace of living in Thy will; and that when their days of life in this world are ended, They may come into Thy eternal Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

If it is desired, a choral *Amen* may be used.

Then the minister shall read one or more of the following scriptures: John 3: 1-7; Acts 2: 38-42; Ephesians 3: 14-19.

Then shall the first one to be baptized enter the water—the minister taking him by the hand, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (or some other fitting word from Scripture). After the person has knelt in the water, the minister shall say:

....., God by His Spirit has led you to this hour of dedication. And we have prayed that His Spirit may dwell within you, that you may ever be a temple of His Spirit, and that you may be a shining light of our Lord in this world. It is needful now that you make known your intent to follow Christ, in God's presence and in the presence of the Body of Christ.

Do you truly repent of your sins and confess and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Applicant: I do.

Do you purpose to study the New Testament and so learn what God's will is for your life?

Applicant: I do.

Do you purpose to live in keeping with the teachings and spirit of the New Testament?

Applicant: I do.

Do you purpose to be a faithful member of the Body of Christ?

Applicant: I do.

Do you desire to seal these vows in Christian baptism?

Applicant: I do.

Then shall the minister baptize the person in the way of our faith, and laying his hands upon the head of the baptized shall say:

Let us pray:

Ever-living God, grant that everything unworthy and sinful in our brother may die, and that the virtues and graces of Christ may live in and through his life, to the building up of Thy church and the glory of Thy name. Guide him from this day forward by Thy Holy Spirit, and make him to know the fullness of Thy grace, and to be ever a faithful Son in Thy holy family; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

If it is desired, a choral *Amen* may be used.

Then the person baptized will leave the water, as the choir sings softly one of the great hymns of the new life in Christ. The choir shall continue singing until the next candidate has knelt. After the last person has been baptized and the prayer offered, the congregation and the choir may sing the hymn, *Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed* or *The Doxology* or some other fitting hymn. Or the minister may call the people to prayer and the choir will sing Mallott's *The Lord's Prayer*. At the conclusion the minister will pronounce the benediction. (All choir numbers should be sung from the rear of the church, preferably from a balcony.)

Jude 24 is a fitting benediction, with the choral *Amen* following.

Third Form (for Youths or Adults)

Life's greatest moment is the hour of giving body, mind, and spirit to God. Everything should be done to make this a memorable event in the experience of youth. It may take the form of an evening candlelight service, using the choirs, and a fitting meditation on the meaning of surrender to God through Christ for our day. The whole service should be in celebration of new life in Christ, begun through the sacrament of baptism. The baptism itself should be the concluding part of the worship experience.

The minister entering into the baptismal waters shall read from Matthew 28, verse 16 to the close. Then shall he say:

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Then the minister shall say:

Let us pray.

God of mercy and redeeming love, who didst give Jesus to be the Savior and Lord of life, and who didst command that young men and women should learn His way, and become disciples through the waters of baptism, open our hearts to a new realization of Thy presence, and grant that these now to be baptized may receive the fullness of Thy grace and ever remain faithful to Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

If it is desired, a choral *Amen* may be used.

Then the minister shall receive by the hand the first one to be baptized. And with the person kneeling the minister shall say:

....., you have come desiring to receive holy baptism, and thus make Christ the Lord of your life. We have prayed that God would assist you to make a full surrender to the love and direction of Christ, that henceforth people may increasingly see that you have been with Jesus, and that He is living again in you. Therefore, it is needful that you, in the presence of God and of these, your brethren, indicate your purpose to accept the obligations of the sacrament of baptism by answering the following questions:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and accept Him as your Savior and Lord?

Applicant: I do.

Do you renounce all sin and all evil ways and earnestly repent of them, trusting God for forgiveness?

Applicant: I do.

Do you promise by the help of God to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself?

Applicant: I do.

Do you promise by God's help to be Christ's true and faithful disciple to your life's end, living in the peace, fellowship, and service of His church, and supporting it by your prayers and your stewardship?

Applicant: I do.

Then shall baptism by trine immersion be administered. At the conclusion the minister shall place his hands on the head of the one baptized and pray:

Grant, O Lord, that this one may ever walk in newness of life, be guided by Thy gracious Spirit, be faithful to Thee at all times, and so strengthen the church of Christ in the world and bring glory to Thee. Make him (her) to be one in whom Christ is seen to live again. Through our living Lord. Amen.

The choir shall sing softly some great hymn of the faith as the baptized one leaves the water, and as the next one enters the water.

After the last one is baptized, the congregation shall rise and sing a hymn, and the minister shall pronounce the benediction from the water.

So far as possible let the candidates for baptism be dressed in white; the church might provide these robes. Also, on Easter morning—early—with candle light this service may be followed. It could come at the conclusion of an Easter morning celebration of Christ's victory.

Note: In connection with the baptism of youth a candlelighting symbolism can be carried out in a meaningful and uplifting way.

Place a table at a suitable spot in the sanctuary and upon it tall, unlighted white candles in candleholders. A young woman in a white

robe may stand beside the table holding in her hand a tall lighted candle. As each person is baptized this young woman shall reverently light a candle on the table, and say in full, clear voice, "I light this candle as a sign that has aspired to be a light of Christ in the world, and has by surrender through baptism taken into his life the healing light of God."

There should be one more candle on the table than there are candidates for baptism. When the last person is baptized, and his candle is lighted, then the minister shall address the congregation:

Is there another who would take on the mantle of Christ and become a lightbearer for Him?

A choir in the balcony—or the congregation—would sing quietly an invitation hymn. If one or more should respond, then at the close of the hymn candles should be lighted but the phrase, "has by surrender through baptism, etc.," shall be omitted. If there is no response, then the minister shall from the baptismal waters close with a prayer and a benediction.

RECEIVING MEMBERS BY REBAPTISM

Members of other denominations who have not been baptized by trine immersion may be received into full membership by rebaptism. Ministers should appreciate the Christian experience of these people. They may need special instruction concerning the distinctive doctrines and policies of the Church of the Brethren.

RECEIVING MEMBERS ON FORMER BAPTISM

The following is the decision of the 1915 Annual Conference concerning receiving members without rebaptism:

Persons that are satisfied with their baptism, [it] having been performed in the scriptural manner, viz., trine immersion unto remission of sins, and desire to unite with the church, after giving evidence that their faith and repentance are genuine, and after a confession of faith in the Scriptures as understood and practiced by the church, may be received by the laying on of hands, if this has not been done, and the hand of fellowship, and kiss of love.

RECEIVING MEMBERS BY LETTER

First Form

Members of the Church of the Brethren presenting letters of membership may be received formally thus: The minister shall say:

The following present letters of membership. They

will rise as their names are called and come forward to the worship center of the church. (The minister reads their names.) Dear brethren (sisters), you have already made public confession of your faith in Christ, and have been recommended to the fostering care and fellowship of this church. By presenting your letters, do you again renew your vows of faithfulness to Christ and His gospel as interpreted by the Church of the Brethren, desiring in all things to walk worthily of your high calling in Christ Jesus? And do you now willingly unite yourselves with this church and accept its program of service? Do you promise to pray for its upbuilding and usefulness; to help in sustaining its worship, activities, and charities; and to live with us in the bond of Christian fellowship? Do you promise?

Each one responds: I do.

Then the minister shall invite the members of the church to stand and join in a united welcome to those being received into membership.

They shall say together:

We, then, the members of this church, welcome you with joy into our communion and fellowship. We pledge to you our sympathy, our help, and our prayers, that you may evermore increase in the knowledge and love of God. God grant that loving and being loved, blessing and being blessed, serving and being served, we may be prepared while we dwell together on earth for the perfect fellowship of the life everlasting.⁵⁸

Then shall the congregation unite in a hymn that celebrates the fellowship of the church. At the close of the hymn, the minister shall receive each one by the right hand of fellowship, giving to each one a watchword, a verse of Scripture that might from that time guide him in the fellowship of the church. It is also fitting that the congre-

⁵⁸ From *A Book of Worship for Free Churches*, copyright 1948 by the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches. All rights reserved.

gation receive these new members by the right hand of fellowship. The benediction may then follow.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Scriptural watchwords to be given to members on the day of reception into membership in the church. These should not only be spoken but be given to each person on a slip of paper by the minister.

Matthew—5: 16; 6: 33; 6: 35; 10: 32; 10: 38, 39; 11: 28; 24: 13

John—8: 12; 8: 31, 32; 12: 26; 12: 46; 13: 34; 14: 6; 15: 4; 15: 8; 15: 10; 15: 15

Romans—6: 13; 8: 14; 14: 7, 8; 14: 19

1 Corinthians—1: 9; 3: 16; 15: 58

Galatians—6: 2, 9

Ephesians—6: 13

Philippians—2: 12, 13

Colossians—2: 6, 7; 3: 17; 4: 2

1 Thessalonians —2: 12

1 Timothy—4: 12; 6: 12

Hebrews—10: 23

Second Form

On the day set aside, all that are to be received into the membership of the church shall be called forward by the minister, and the minister speaking to the people shall say:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the church is God's new humanity in this world. It is His will that the church abide and be the servant of His holy purpose to each generation. It is the divine will that the church shall promote the Christian fellowship, administer the Word and the sacraments, and maintain an order of worship and discipline that will nurture the believers and lead to the conversion of the world. Every person is in daily need of the help of God that flows through the ministries of the church.

In this fellowship of Christ the persons before you desire to be members. They have received the sacrament

of baptism, know its meaning, and the duties that fall upon the members within the Body of Christ. They have been instructed in the teachings and aims of the church, and are now ready to re-affirm their faith.

Then the minister addressing those to be received into the church shall say:

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, you have come desiring membership in this congregation. We welcome you and rejoice in this step that you are taking. We then invite you to renew your faith and declare your purpose by answering the following questions:

Do you here in the presence of God and this fellowship of Christ renew the vows made at your baptism?

Answer: I do.

Do you again confess Jesus Christ as your Savior and pledge your allegiance to His cause?

Answer: I do.

Do you affirm again the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament?

Answer: I do.

Will you, with God's help, be a loyal member of the church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and service?

Answer: I will.

Then the minister shall ask the members to be received to kneel and he shall lay his hand upon the head of each one and say:

May God bless you with His grace, and confirm you again in the faith and fellowship of Christ, and make you a true and faithful member of this church.

Then the minister will call upon all to pray. Following the prayer those being received shall rise, and the minister shall say to the congregation:

Brothers and sisters, we commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members

of Christ's church. Will you in the spirit of Christian love extend to them greeting and fellowship?

Then shall the people say together:

We rejoice to receive you as members of this congregation. We welcome you to all its ministries and services. Your growth in the graces of the spirit; your peace, joy, and well-being shall ever be our concern. With you we rededicate ourselves to God and to His will in Jesus Christ. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Then the minister and a representative of the church shall receive them with the right hand of fellowship, the minister giving to each one a Scriptural watchword. Then may be sung a hymn of Christian fellowship, followed by the benediction.

J. *Special Services*

BREAKING GROUND FOR A CHURCH⁵⁹

Call to Worship and Invocation

The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

Is not the Lord your God with you, and hath he not given you rest on every side? Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise, therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God.

Almighty God, our Father: The earth is Thine and the fullness thereof. Thou hast made it fruitful and filled it with beauty, and hast taught us to occupy the earth and subdue it, and to pray that Thy Kingdom may come, as in heaven so on earth. Consecrate this spot of ground which we set apart in the midst of Thy vineyard. Accept the sacrificial act by which we break this sod. Sow here the good seed of the Kingdom, and bring forth in this place the rich fruitage of an abundant spiritual harvest to the honor of Thy great name. Amen.

⁵⁹ Adapted from *Manual of the Congregational and Christian Churches*, 1936 edition, by Charles Emerson Burton. Used by permission of the Pilgrim Press.

Scripture: Genesis 28: 10-22, or the responsive reading of the Twenty-fourth Psalm

Appropriate Hymn

Prayer

Benediction

LAYING A CORNERSTONE

Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation

Scripture Reading: 1 Chronicles 29: 10-18; Ezra 3: 10-13; Isaiah 28: 16; Psalm 132: 1-9, 13-16; 1 Peter 2: 4-7; 1 Corinthians 3: 9-17; Ephesians 2: 19-22; or some other passage

Address

Laying of the Stone

Into the stone the minister usually places some significant documents, such as a history of the church, a copy from the minutes ordering the erection of the building, the names of the building committee and other church officials, a Bible, a hymnal, and church publications. After these have been placed in the stone, the minister, assisted by the builder, shall lay the stone in its place.

Then the minister, placing his hand on it, shall say:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we lay this cornerstone of a building to be erected here to be known as the Church of the Brethren, and devoted to the worship of Almighty God. "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious,

and he who believes in him will not be put to shame."

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Hymn: I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

Benediction

DEDICATING A CHURCH

(Following a regular worship service adapted to the occasion)

Prelude

The Doxology

Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

*Hymns: The Church's One Foundation, or I Love Thy Kingdom,
Lord*

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 6: 12-21; Psalm 48; Psalm 122; Matthew 16: 13-20; Ephesians 2: 10-22; Hebrews 10: 19-25, or some other appropriate passage. Or a responsive reading may be used.

Prayer

Anthem

Dedicatory Sermon

Statement by a Member of the Building Committee

The Dedicatory Offering

Act of Dedication

Minister: To the glory of God our Father, by whose favor we have built this house; to the honor of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, our Lord and Savior; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, Source of life and light;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For worship in prayer and song; for the ministry of the Word; for the celebration of the holy sacraments;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the memory of our beloved dead; to the gentle and true of former times; to all who have unloosed the bonds of ignorance and wrong;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the welfare of the living; to those whose ways are good and those whose ways are evil; to the strong souls that stoop to share the burden of their fellows; to the weak and defenseless; to the darkened mind, the tempted heart, the life-weary and the heavy-laden, and to all human need;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the ministry of the strong to the weak; to the bringing of light in darkness; to the giving of hope, courage, and spiritual health to all human hearts;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the proclamation of the truth that sets men free, to the liberty of the sons of God; to reverence for all worth of the past and to the eager acceptance of all good which the future may unfold;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the sanctification of the family; for the guidance of childhood; for the salvation of men;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the fostering of patriotism; for the training of conscience; for aggression against evil;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the help of the needy; for the promotion of brotherhood; for bringing in the kingdom of God;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: As a tribute of gratitude and love, a freewill offering of thanksgiving and praise, from those who have tasted the cup of thy salvation and experienced the riches of thy grace;

Congregation: We, the people of this church and congregation, now consecrating ourselves anew, dedicate this entire building in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Choir and Congregation: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

—*From Manual of the Congregational and Christian Churches*⁶⁰

The Dedictory Prayer

Hymn: O Where Are Kings and Empires Now?

Benediction and Choral Amen

⁶⁰ Burton, *op. cit.*

DEDICATION OF MEMORIALS, GIFTS, AND CHURCH FURNISHINGS

The minister shall say:

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Let us pray.

Blessed and glorious Lord God Almighty, by whose power, wisdom, and love all things are sanctified, enlightened, and made perfect, be merciful unto us and bless us, we beseech Thee, and cause Thy face to shine upon us, that what we now do may please Thee, and show forth the honor of Thy name. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We ask now to unveil the Memorial.

The person who has been selected shall say to the minister:

In memory of, we ask you to receive this Memorial and to dedicate it to the glory and praise of God.

Then the minister shall respond as follows:

I accept this Memorial as a sacred trust, and shall treasure it with reverence and gratitude.

And now in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we dedicate this Memorial to the honor and the glory of our God.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DEDICATION OF AN ORGAN

Write to the Brethren Publishing House, 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois, for a printed order of worship.

DEDICATING A PARSONAGE

Prelude

Call to Worship

Leader: "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'"

People: Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all you have.

All: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and eat with him, and he with me."

The Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

The Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 13; Matthew 5: 3-9, 13-16; or some other appropriate passage.

Brief Address

Solo: Bless This House (Brahe)

Presentation of Parsonage Keys to the Pastor

A member of the board of trustees shall say to the minister:

In token of our love for the church of Jesus Christ which it is our joy through the building of this parsonage to seek to promote, and as an expression of our appreciation of the loving service of God's minister and of his standing in this community, on behalf of the board of trustees and in the name of the church, I gladly present to you the keys that unlock and guard the privileges and blessings of this new parsonage home.

Pastor's Response

On behalf of myself and my family, we receive this beautiful and commodious residence for a dwelling place while among you with deep appreciation of the generous and kindly spirit, the faith and devotion which it represents, a reflection of the splendid character of this people; and on behalf of those ministers and families who shall occupy this parsonage in years to come, I assure you that this home shall be occupied with grateful satisfaction and to the end that God's church and Kingdom may be advanced..

May this residence ever house a home where warmhearted fellowship, understanding counsel, and spiritual enrichment may be shared. In the name of Him who stands back of the realization of this earthly dream, and in the name of His church, you are invited now to join in dedicating this parsonage home.

The Service of Dedication

Minister: In gratitude to our heavenly Father and to His glory through whose favor and blessing we have been able to build (purchase and pay for) this pastoral home,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

Minister: In grateful appreciation of the generosity, loyalty, and spirit of unity manifested by the members and friends of this congregation in this undertaking,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

Minister: That it may be a place of fellowship, comradeship, hospitality, and kindly influences,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

Minister: To the sanctification of work and leisure, of gaiety and laughter, of music and worship,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

Minister: To those who choose to take upon them the holy vows of marriage within these walls,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

Minister: To those who need counsel and inspiration, comfort and consolation, confession and prayer, and to those who come seeking to know God,

People: We dedicate this parsonage.

The Dedicatory Prayer

O God, our heavenly Father, who hast "set the solitary in families," by whose favor and help this house has been built, be pleased to let Thy blessing rest upon it, upon those who now and in the years to come shall abide here

and upon those who shall from day to day pass through its portals. We bid Thee come, our heavenly Father, to this dwelling place that the spirit of Christian love may glow in this home, radiating to other homes appreciation, goodwill, and holy cheer.

And, our heavenly Father, remembering that we have here only a tenting place of our pilgrimage up to the eternities and that Thou hast set ajar before us the radiant gates of the city celestial, enable us all so to live and labor that we shall come at last to the home "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Doxology

The Benediction

Open house may be observed following the service, if desired.

ANNIVERSARY OF A CHURCH⁶¹

Organ Prelude

Hymn of Praise or Processional

Call to Worship

Minister: Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty.

People: I will give thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise thee among much people.

Minister: O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

People: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.

⁶¹ Reprinted from *A Book of Worship for Free Churches*, copyright 1948 by the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches. All rights reserved.

Minister: The glory of the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

People: I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Invocation

General Confession (minister and congregation)

All-gracious Father, through whose strength our fathers were guided and saved, and by whose mercy we are brought to this blessed day of remembrance; look with compassion, we beseech thee, on us thy children gathered in the peace of this thy house. We confess before thee our shortcomings and our sins. We have not loved thee with our whole heart nor our neighbor as ourselves; we have been fearful when we should have had faith; we have been selfish when we should have been generous; we have sought the things of this world more than the imperishable treasures of thy kingdom. Call us back, O Lord most mighty; spare and redeem us, that we may be the children of thy covenant, and the servants of thy holy will; through thy Son our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

The Lord's Prayer

Litany of Rededication

Minister: O God, who art present in all places of thy dominion to accept and further the services of all thy creatures; hear us, we humbly beseech thee, and by thy Holy Spirit reconsecrate this house which we here rededicate unto thee.

For the worship of thy holy Name;
For the ministry of the word;
For the administration of the sacraments;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: For comfort to those who mourn;

For help to those who are tempted;
For strength to those who are weak;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: For the blessing of the family;
For the guidance of childhood;
For the summoning of youth to a life of
service;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: For sympathy and fellowship with the needy;
For brotherhood with all men;
For the unity of all believers in Christ;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: For aggression against evil;
For fostering civic righteousness;
For promoting peace and justice in all the
earth;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: For the sending forth of the gospel unto the
uttermost parts of the earth;
For the giving of hope and courage to those
that labor in the Lord;
For the consecration of life and service;

People: We rededicate this house.

Minister: O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
our Father which art in heaven;

People: To thee we rededicate this house.

Minister: O God, the Holy Spirit, Teacher, Sanctifier,
and Comforter, Lord and Giver of life;

People: To thee we rededicate this house.

Scripture Lesson

Hymn

Affirmation of Faith

Gloria Patri

Service of Prayer

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Let us pray.

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.

People: And grant us thy salvation.

Minister: O God, make clean our hearts within us.

People: And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

Prayer for all Conditions of Men

Prayer for the Nation

Prayer for the Church

Choral Response

Offertory Service

Doxology

Anniversary Sermon

Recessional

Benediction and Choral Amen

Organ Postlude

SERVICE OF MEDITATION AND RENEWAL

Organ Prelude

A Period of Silent Meditation

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love;
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,
who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."

And there shall be continuous day, not day and not
night, for at evening time there shall be light.

This is the message we have heard from him and
proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness
at all.

*The Lord's Prayer, and Other Prayers
Hymn, or Other Music
A Reading From the Bible or From Other Literature of Devotion
The Litany*

Minister: O God most High, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, whose glory shines beyond the farthest star,

People: Lift up our hearts to Thee.

Minister: O God, so infinitely great that we Thy children seem sometimes far off from Thee,

People: Draw near to us, we pray.

Minister: O God, whose love exalts our littleness, whose gentleness doth make us great,

People: Come Thou into our hearts this day.

Minister: For all this day has held of happiness,

People: We thank Thee.

Minister: For the familiar mercies which too often we forget, for food, and shelter, for health and strength, for sleep and waking, for rest at night and for the renewal of the morning,

People: We thank Thee.

Minister: For our homes, for friendships, and for the unspeakable blessings of love,

People: We thank Thee.

Minister: For lightheartedness and laughter, for all clean amusement, for the glory of the out-of-doors, for winter snow, and hills, and sky,

People: We thank Thee.

Minister: For all around us which is beautiful, and for every material blessing which protects the inner life,

People: We thank Thee.

Minister: Yet with our thankfulness, O God our Father, for all that Thou hast given, we join our prayers that we may be brave enough to desire Thy greater gifts.

We pray Thee, not most of all that we may be sheltered, but that we may be strong; not that life may be always pleasant, but that we may be dependable; not that we may receive much, but that we may give more.

For the grace to walk with joyfulness on sunny roads; but also for the gallantry to go forward without flinching when the road is dark and hard,

People: We pray Thee, O our Father.

Minister: For such desire to do well as shall make us grateful for appreciation, yet never dependent on any man's applause; for modesty in success and for steadfastness in defeat,

People: We pray Thee, O our Father.

Minister: For the simplicity of spirit which is aglow in all our blessings, yet for the unselfishness which cannot rest until it shares the best we have with those whose need is greater than our own,

People: We pray Thee, O our Father.

Minister: For clear eyes to see the highest, for clean hearts to love it, and for steadfast wills to follow on its way,

People: We pray Thee, O our Father.

Minister: And this above all we pray:

Help us so to know Christ and His life that the same mind which was in Him may be in us, and that we, like Him, may be in the world and yet not of it;

Help us so to know Christ and the grandeur of His death that we may be strong to walk upon His way, even when it leads toward a cross.

Help us so to know Christ and the power of His resurrection that as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.

A Moment of Silence

Hymn

The Address

Hymn, or Other Music

The Following Prayers:

O God our Father, as the evening shadows fall, grant that in Thy light we may see light. May the remembrance of Thy steadfastness shine above us like the quiet stars; and may all the noise and fret of the day be stilled by the benediction of Thy peace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And unto Thee, O Father, we commit not only ourselves but all those who are dear to us, wherever they may be. Grant to them rest, and protection from all dangers of the night. Forgive them and us for any failures of the day, and especially for any sins against love. Help us more and more to learn our need of one another, and above all our need of Thee, O Love that wilt not let us go. Amen.

A Final Meditation

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, his might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need;
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward;
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

O Lord Jesus, revealer of the Father, speak to us again Thy promise: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

PART TWO

Worship Helps

I. CALLS TO WORSHIP

A. *Praise*

This is the day which the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and pay your vows to the Most High.

O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.

The LORD has made known his victory,
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the
nations.

The Mighty One, God the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

"Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples!

Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works!

Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!
Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek his presence continually!

"Give thanks to the LORD,
call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the nations,
proclaim that his name is exalted.

"Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth."

"Praise our God, all you his servants,
you who fear him small and great."

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great
multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the
sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying,
"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty
reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory.

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and pay your vows to the Most High.

O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!

Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!
Worship the LORD in holy array.

B. Penitence

For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?
Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord,
a God feared in the council of the holy ones,
great and terrible above all that are round about
him?

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not
despise.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the
truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and
just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all un-
righteousness.

“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?”

He has showed you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

“Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor requite us according to our iniquities.
As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.

“Yet even now,” says the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart.
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. . . .”

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

C. Prayer

“Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.
He fulfills the desire of all who fear him,
he also hears their cry, and saves them.

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

“For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart.”

And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

Strive for peace with all men, and for the consecration without which no one will see the Lord.

The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him . . . let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

To the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.

D. *Holy Communion*

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

Oh send out thy light and thy truth;

let them lead me,

let them bring me to thy holy hill

and to thy dwelling!

Then I will go to the altar of God,

to God my exceeding joy;

and I will praise thee with the lyre,

O God, my God.

For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

"Come; for all is now ready."

Jesus said to them, ". . . and him who comes to me I will not cast out."

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

E. *Advent*

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

"Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

"Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

Sing and rejoice; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD.

It is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

F. *Christmas*

For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

"Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

"Glory be to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is
pleased!"

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

G. *Lent*

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

“Come now, let us reason together,
says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.”

Let us test and examine our ways,
and return to the LORD!

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.”

“Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.”

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

If any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

H. *Palm Sunday*

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

“Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!”

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,
and does not swear deceitfully.

He will receive blessing from the LORD,
and vindication from the God of his salvation.

Lift up your heads, O gates!

and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

I. *Good Friday*

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.

"The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

J. *Easter*

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

"O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?"

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This is the day which the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one;
I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have
the keys of Death and Hades.

Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem;
for the LORD has comforted his people.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life;
he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and
whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

K. *Whitsunday*

"And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh."

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses."

"For the promise is to you and to your children and to
all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls
to him."

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all
together in one place. And they were all filled with the
Holy Spirit.

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true
worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for
such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and
those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of
God.

It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit.

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.

Wilt thou not revive us again,
that thy people may rejoice in thee?

L. Old Year

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting
to everlasting
upon those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children.

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is thy faithfulness.

“Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!

M. New Year

For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

And he who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!

I, I am the Lord,
and besides me there is no savior.

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.”

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!

N. Harvest Thanksgiving

The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein.

“Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

Bless our God, O peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept us among the living,
and has not let our feet slip.

“I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD.”

“Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

O taste and see that the LORD is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the sons of men!
For he satisfies him who is thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good things.

Jesus then said to them, “. . . my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.”

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above.

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!

O. *Peace*

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his saints, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

“Be still, and know that I am God.
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth!”

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned.

—May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!

“And I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.”

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

P. Responsive Calls to Worship

(Minister and People or Minister and Choir)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,
who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust.”

O thou who hearest prayer!
To thee shall all flesh come.
Worship the LORD in holy array;
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him, bless his name!

For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Praise the LORD!
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the sons of men!

The LORD is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be his glorious name for ever;
may his glory fill the whole earth!

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him, bless his name!

For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.

O Lord, open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and for evermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

Sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.
"Surely the LORD is in this place. This is none other than the
house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."
The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice;
I will be glad and exult in thee,
I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High.
"Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and
the glory, and the victory, and the majesty."
Because thy steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise thee.

And there shall be continuous day, not day and not
night, for at evening time there shall be light.
For with thee is the fountain of life;
in thy light do we see light.
Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee,
and the lifting up of my hands as an evening
sacrifice!

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in
spirit and truth."

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Oh send out thy light and thy truth;
let them lead me,
let them bring me to thy holy hill.

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God,
and God abides in him.

Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening
to shout for joy.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Preserve me, O God, for in thee I take refuge.

May those who love thy salvation
say continually, “Great is the LORD!”

Yea, our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the lands!
Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!

II. DECLARATIONS OF FAITH

A. *A Declaration of Belief*

I believe in God, the creator of heaven and of earth,
Lord of all power and might;

I believe in Jesus Christ, in whom the grace and glory of
God became incarnate;

I believe in the Holy Spirit by whom the heavenly flame
is brought to human souls;

I believe in the Oneness of Him who is made manifest in
all things great and good.

I acknowledge the law of God which is written in the
majesty of suns and stars;

I acknowledge the truth of God within which alone we
can be free;

I acknowledge the love of God by which alone we are
redeemed;

I acknowledge the fellowship of all saints

Who learned of Christ and lived for Him.

Who carried in their hearts the flame of consecration
and of courage,

Who cared and endured and triumphed even in defeat:

The evangelists, and apostles, and the martyrs,

The singers of the triumph of the soul,

The lovers and the servants of mankind,

Who gave their lives, and in the giving found all life
fulfilled,

Who in their gentleness were great.

Through them and unto God I lift my soul in thankfulness
and in eternal praise. Amen.

—Russell Bowie¹

B. *A Declaration of Faith, at Christmastime*

I believe in Jesus Christ, and in the beauty of the gospel
that began in Bethlehem.

I believe in him whose spirit glorified a little town;

Of whose coming only shepherds saw the sign,

And for whom the crowded inn could find no room.

I believe in him whom the kings of the earth ignored

And the proud could never understand;

¹ From *Lift Up Your Hearts*, by Russell Bowie, copyright 1942. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

Whose paths were among the common people,
Whose welcome came from men of hungry hearts.

I believe in him who proclaimed the love of God to be
invincible:

Whose cradle was a mother's arms,
Whose home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth,
Who looked at men and made them see what his
love saw in them;
Who by his love brought sinners back to purity,
And lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of
God.

I confess our everlasting need of God:

The need of forgiveness for our greed and selfishness,
The need of life for empty souls,
The need of love for hearts grown cold.

I acknowledge the glory of all that is like Christ:

The steadfastness of friends,
The blessedness of homes,
The beauty of compassion,
The miracle of many hearts made kind at Christmas,
The courage of those who dare to resist all passion,
hate, and war.

I believe that only by love expressed shall the earth at
length be purified.

And I acknowledge in Christ

A faith that sees beyond the partial fact,
A trust in life redeemed that looks beyond our present
evil;

And I pray that this redemption may begin in us who
kneel and say together now—(The Lord's Prayer)

—Russell Bowie²

² *Ibid.*

C. A Scriptural Confession of Faith

God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God is light and in him is no darkness at all, neither shadow that is cast by turning. God is love and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. Love never faileth, and there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. So then we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh, but we received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father. Being therefore always of good courage, we walk by faith, not by sight, and we make it our aim to be well pleasing unto him. For we know that to them that love God, all things work together for good. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

D. A Creed in New Testament Language

We believe that God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

We believe that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the whole earth.

We believe that God is love, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

We believe that the Lord Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

We believe that if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

We believe that, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

We believe that the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but that he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Amen.

E. Tolstoy's Confession of Faith

I believe in God, who is for me spirit, love, the principle of all things. I believe that God is in me, as I am in Him.

I believe that the true welfare of man consists in fulfilling the will of God.

I believe that from the fulfillment of the will of God there can follow nothing but that which is good for me and for all men.

I believe that the will of God is that every man should love his fellow-men, and should act towards others as he desires that they should act toward him.

I believe that the reason of life is for each of us simply to grow in love.

I believe that this growth in love will contribute more than any other force to establish the Kingdom of God on earth—

To replace a social life in which division, falsehood and violence are all-powerful, with a new order in which humanity, truth and brotherhood will reign.

I believe that the will of God has never been more clearly, more freely expressed than in the teaching of Jesus.

I believe that this teaching will give welfare to all humanity, save men from destruction, and give this world the greatest happiness.

—Albert Palmer³

F. Confession of Faith

I believe in the universe. I rejoice in its beauty and find reassurances in its order as revealed by scientific research. I try to adjust my life to its laws.

I believe in the moral law. At the human level I find

³ From *Aids to Worship*, by Albert Palmer, copyright 1944. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

that the cosmic order blossoms forth in great moral and spiritual values. I accept them and seek to live in tune with the Infinite.

I believe in human personality, the most immediate and wonderful thing I know. Its consciousness, intelligence, courage, sense of moral values, love of beauty and creative power are fundamental facts of experience. In spite of sin, suffering and evil, human personality is normally good and never quite gives up struggling toward better things.

I believe in God. Such a universe is not an affair of chance. At the heart of it is an intelligent, ever-present, dependable Power. Having produced personality, God cannot himself be impersonal but rather must be super-personal. My hope of immortality is in his integrity and creative love.

I believe in Jesus. As humanity at its noblest, he is also our clearest picture of God. God cannot be less than Jesus. So far as God could reveal himself in human life, we have that revelation in Christ and the cross.

I believe in the onward urge of humanity, not an inevitable automatic progress but a creative, divinely motivated struggle toward justice, peace, brotherhood, spiritual values and unseen goals of nobler living—the Kingdom of heaven!

Finally I believe in the church as the fellowship of all who love the Lord and seek to build the Kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men and the life of the world.

—Albert Palmer⁴

G. A Creed for Today

I believe in the love of God through Jesus Christ.

I believe in the Cross of Calvary as the ground plan of the universe,

⁴ *Ibid.*

I believe in the transcendental meaning and hope of Life.

I believe that the true goods of life lie in the unseen, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

I believe that the real values of life are the good, the true, and the beautiful.

I believe in the salvability and immortality of every man, and in the infinite value of every living soul.

I believe in the practicability of the Kingdom of God, and in freedom to choose it and to work for it.

I believe in the sacramental quality of my day's work and that I may see and serve God in it.

I believe in a grace that can overcome my selfishness and pride and that will enable me to overcome temptation, and upon which I need never call in vain.

I believe in love as the final law of life.

And in this faith, by the help of God, I mean to live this day and all my days.

—Samuel McComb⁵

III. OFFERTORY SENTENCES

For other offertory sentences see page 665 of *The Brethren Hymnal*.

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: he who contributes, in liberality; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁵ From *A Book of Modern Prayers*.

Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men.

Honor the LORD with your substance
and with the first fruits of all your produce.

For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he has not.

For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

IV. BENEDICTIONS

Other benedictions may be found on page 666 of *The Brethren Hymnal*.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom.

To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst us and remain with us always. Amen.

—Adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer*⁶

⁶ Used by permission of Dr. John Suter, custodian of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

“The LORD watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other.”

Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection we commit ourselves. The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and evermore. Amen.

—*The Aaronic Blessing, 1400 B. C.*

May our Lord Jesus Christ be near us to defend us, within us to refresh us, around us to preserve us, before us to guide us, behind us to justify us, above us to bless us, Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God for evermore. Amen.

✕ May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, rest upon us and upon all our work and worship done in His name. May he give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us, now and for evermore. Amen.

May the Lord lead us when we go and keep us when we sleep, and talk with us when we wake; and may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

And now may the blessing of the Lord rest and remain upon all his people in every land and every tongue. The Lord meet in mercy all that seek Him. The Lord comfort all that suffer and mourn. The Lord hasten His coming, and now give us and all His people peace by all means. Amen.

May the rich blessing of the Lord attend us, and grant us all remission of our sins.

May the Lord graciously protect us from all evil and mercifully preserve and keep us in all good, and

May He who created and redeemed us preserve us for Himself unspotted to the end. Amen.

—*Mozarabic Psalter*

May God, the Lord, bless us with all heavenly benediction, and make us pure and holy in His sight.

May the riches of His glory abound in us.

May he instruct us with the word of truth, inform us with the Gospel of salvation, and enrich us with His love.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary*

May God the Father bless us, Who created all things in the beginning.

May the Son bless us, Who for our salvation came down from His throne on high.

May the Holy Ghost bless us, Who rested as a Dove on the Christ in Jordan.

May He sanctify us in the Trinity Whose coming to judgment all nations look for. Amen.

—*The Gallican Missal*

Now may the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace, in your going out, and in your coming in; in your sitting down and your rising up; in your work and in your play; in your joy and in your sorrow, in your laughter and in your tears; until that day comes which is without dawn and without dark. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Thomas Graham*

V. PRAYERS

These prayers are to be used for spiritual enrichment and are not to be slavishly followed.

A. *Of Praise and Thanksgiving*

Almighty God, whose glory the heavens are telling, the earth His power, and the sea His might, and whose greatness all feeling and thinking creatures everywhere herald; to Thee belongeth glory, honor, might, greatness and magnificence now and forever, to the ages of ages, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Liturgy of St. James, second century*

Thanks be to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which Thou hast given us; for all the pains and insults which Thou hast borne for us. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly; for Thine own sake. Amen.

—*St. Richard, Bishop of Chichester, A. D. 1244*

O God, who, by making the evening to succeed the day, hast bestowed the gift of repose on human weakness, grant, we beseech Thee, that while we enjoy those timely blessings we may acknowledge Him from whom they come, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Mozarabic Liturgy, before A. D. 700*

B. *Of Faith in God's Love*

O Lord, our heavenly Father, who orderest all things for our eternal good, mercifully enlighten our minds, and give us a firm and abiding trust in Thy love and care. Silence our murmurings, quiet our fears, and dispel our doubts, that rising above our afflictions and our anxieties, we may rest on Thee, the Rock of Everlasting Strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*A New Book of Worship, A. D. 1876*

O God, who art the unsearchable abyss of peace, the ineffable sea of love, the fountain of blessings, and the bestower of affection, who sendest peace to those that receive it; open to us this day the sea of Thy love, and water us with the plenteous streams from the riches of Thy grace. Make us children of quietness, and heirs of peace. Enkindle in us the fire of Thy love; sow in us Thy fear; strengthen our weakness by Thy power; bind us closely to Thee and to each other in one firm bond of unity; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Syrian Clementine Liturgy, A. D. 95*

O LORD, whose way is perfect, help us, we pray Thee, always to trust in Thy goodness; that, walking with Thee and following Thee in all simplicity, we may possess quiet and contented minds, and may cast all our care on Thee, for Thou carest for us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Christina G. Rosetti*

O God our heavenly Father, renew in us the sense of Thy gracious Presence, and let it be a constant impulse within us to peace, trustfulness, and courage on our pilgrimage. Let us hold Thee fast with a loving and adoring heart, and let our affections be fixed on Thee, that so the unbroken communion of our hearts with Thee may accompany us whatsoever we do, through life and death. Teach us to pray heartily; to listen for Thy voice within, and never to stifle its warnings. Behold we bring our poor hearts as a sacrifice unto Thee; come and fill Thy sanctuary, and suffer nought impure to enter there. O Thou who art Love, let Thy Divine Spirit flow like a river through our whole souls, and lead us in the right way till we pass into the Land of Promise; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*G. Tersteegen, A. D. 1731*

O Almighty and merciful Father, who art the help of the helpless, and the lifter up of the fallen, look down with Thy mercy on all who are oppressed in mind, body, or circumstance; give them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions; and this we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

—Dean Goulburn, A. D. 1818. Adapted

O Thou God of Peace, unite our hearts by Thy bond of peace, that we may live with one another continually in gentleness and humility, in peace and unity. O Thou God of patience, give us patience in the time of trial, and steadfastness to endure to the end. O Thou spirit of prayer, awaken our hearts, that we may lift up holy hands to God, and cry unto Him in all our distresses. Be our defense and Shade in the time of need, our Help in trial, our Consolation when all things are against us. Come, O Thou Eternal Light, Salvation, and Comfort, be our Light in darkness, our Salvation in life, our Comfort in death, and lead us in the strait way to everlasting life, that we may praise Thee forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Bernhard Albrecht 262

Grant calmness and control of thought to those who are facing uncertainty and anxiety: let their heart stand fast, believing in the Lord.

Be Thou all things to all men, knowing each one and his petition, each house and its need, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Russian Liturgy

O Lord, keep us sensitive to the grace that is around us. May the familiar not become neglected. May we see Thy goodness in our daily bread, and may the comforts of our home take our thoughts to the mercy-seat of God; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—J. H. Jowett

O Lord our God, whose great glory is written all across Thy heavens, yet whose greatest glory is to dwell in the lowly hearts of those who serve Thee here; grant unto us Thine abiding presence, and give our souls Thy peace. When we consider Thy goodness and Thy majesty in all Thou hast made, our hearts are hushed before Thee, our souls bow down in silence in Thy presence, as Thou passest through our lives. We are as nothing, O God. In Thy great creation we are but wandering dust. And yet we thank Thee for Thy thought of us, and for all Thy love shown to us in ways past finding out, for all Thy mercies which we can never reckon up. When we wander from Thy way Thou dost not cast us off. Thy love goes out seeking us, recalling us from waste, wild places where our soul is lost. Do Thou raise us up when we fall; give us the power to stand, and lend us the guiding light of the cross of Thy dear Son, to lead us home where shadows are no more. For His sake. Amen.

—*L. M. Watt*

We beseech Thee, O Lord, remember all for good; have mercy upon all, O God. Remember every soul who, being in any affliction, trouble, or agony, stands in need of Thy mercy and help, all who are in necessity or distress, all who love or hate us. Thou, O Lord, art the Helper of the helpless, the Hope of the hopeless, the Saviour of them who are tossed with tempests, the Haven of them who sail; be Thou all to all. The glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, oh! prosper Thou our handiwork. Lord, be Thou within us, to strengthen us; without us, to keep us; above us, to protect us; beneath us, to uphold us; round about us, to defend us. Blessed be Thou, O Lord our Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

—*Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, A. D. 1555*

O Lord God, our Governor, we beseech Thee, of Thy mercy, that we may have the heavenly vision, and behold things as they seem unto Thee, that the turmoil of this world may be seen by us to be bringing forth the sweet peace of the eternal years and that in all the troubles and sorrows of our own hearts we may behold good; and so, with quiet mind and inward peace, careless of outward storm, we may do the duty of life which brings to us a quiet heart, ever trusting in Thee. We give Thee thanks for all Thy mercy. We beseech Thy forgiveness of all our sins. We pray for Thy guidance in all things, Thy presence in the hour of death, Thy glory in the life to come. Of Thy mercy hear us. Amen.

—George Dawson

O our God, who openest Thy hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness, unto Thee we commit all those who are dear to us; watch over them, we beseech Thee, and provide all things needful for their souls and bodies, from this time for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*St. Nerses of Clajes, A.D. 362*

O God, who art, and wast, and art to come, before whose face the generations rise and pass away, age after age the living seek Thee and find that of Thy faithfulness there is no end. Our fathers in their pilgrimage walked by Thy guidance, and rested on Thy compassion; still to their children be Thou the cloud by day, and the fire by night. Where but in Thee have we a covert from the storm, or shadow from the heat of life? In our manifold temptations, Thou alone knowest and art ever nigh; in sorrow, Thy pity revives the fainting soul; in our prosperity and ease, it is Thy Spirit only that can keep us from pride and keep us humble. O Thou sole Source of peace and righteousness, take now the veil from every heart, and

join us in one communion with Thy prophets and saints who have trusted in Thee and were not ashamed. Not of our worthiness, but of Thy tender mercy hear our prayer: for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. Amen.

—*James Martineau, A. D. 1805*

C. For Forgiveness and Strength

Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve, pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

—*Leonine Sacramentary, A. D. 440*

We can do little, dear Lord, for Thee, but do Thou great things for us. Empty us of ourselves, fill us with Thyself, exterminate in us all evil desires and longings. Purify all our motives. Humble us that our wills may be broken. Wrap us around with Thy holy fear, and bless us with a deepening and abiding contrition for our unnumbered sins, for Thine own sake. Amen.

—*Bishop Grafton, twentieth century*

O Lord, cure our infirmities, pardon our offenses, lighten our burdens, enrich our poverty; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Dr. Sutton, A. D. 1565*

Take from us, O God, all pride and vanity, all boasting and forwardness, and give us the true courage that shows itself by gentleness; the true wisdom that shows itself by simplicity; and the true power that shows itself by modesty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Charles Kingsley*

Heavenly Father, we want to escape suffering and we also want Thy plans to be fulfilled. We applaud Thy will but we want our way. Forgive us because we are so often at war with ourself and give us strength to bring our whole life into submission to Thee. Amen.

—*Charles E. Jefferson*

We beseech Thee, our most gracious God, preserve us from the cares of this life, lest we should be too much entangled therein; also from the many necessities of the body, lest we should be ensnared by pleasure; and from whatsoever is an obstacle to the soul, lest being broken with troubles, we should be overthrown. Give us strength to resist, patience to endure, and constancy to persevere; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Thomas a Kempis, A. D. 1379*

✕ O Lord, Shield of our help; who wilt not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, help us, we entreat Thee, in all our difficulties and wrestlings, to lift up our eyes unto Thee, and stay our hearts on Thee; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Christina G. Rosetti, A.D. 1830*

Lord, we pray not for tranquility, nor that our tribulations may cease; we pray for Thy Spirit and Thy love, that Thou grant us strength and grace to overcome adversity; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*Girolamo Savonarola, A. D. 1481*

Lord, our God, the help of those that flee unto Thee, the hope of those who cry unto Thee; cleanse us from our sins and from every thought displeasing to Thy goodness, that with a pure heart and a clear soul, with perfect love and calm hope, we may venture, confidently and fearlessly, to pray unto Thee. Amen.

—*Saint Basil*

O Thou that art the Light Eternal, the Sun of righteousness, evermore arising and never going down, giving light, food, and gladness to all; mercifully shine upon us, and cast Thy blessed beams upon the dullness of our understanding, and upon the dark mists of our sins and errors; for Thine only merits, who art alone our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Desiderius Erasmus, A. D. 1467*

O Lord our God, great, eternal, wonderful in glory, who keepest covenant and promise for those that love Thee with their whole heart, who art the life of all, the help of those that flee unto Thee, the hope of those who cry unto Thee, cleanse us from our sins, and from every thought displeasing to Thy goodness, cleanse our souls and bodies, our hearts and consciences that with a pure heart and a clear mind, with perfect love and calm hope, we may venture confidently and fearlessly to pray unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Coptic Liturgy of Saint Basil, A. D. 370*

Almighty God, from whom every good prayer cometh, and who pourest out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and supplication, deliver us, when we draw nigh to Thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*William Bright, A. D. 1824*

D. *For Christ's Companionship*

O Christ, our only Saviour, so dwell within us that we may go forth with the light of hope in our eyes, and the fire of inspiration on our lips, Thy Word on our tongues, and Thy love in our hearts. Amen.

—*Source unknown*

O God, who hast made this most sacred night to shine with the illumination of the True Light, grant, we beseech Thee, that, as we have known the mystery of that Light upon earth, we may also perfectly enjoy it in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary, A. D. 494*

O Thou Prince of Peace, who, when Thou wast reviled, reviledst not again, and on the cross didst pray for Thy murderers, implant in our hearts the virtues of gentleness and patience, that we may overcome evil with good, for Thy sake love our enemies, and as children of our heavenly Father seek Thy peace, and evermore rejoice in Thy love; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

—*Treasury of Devotion, A. D. 1869*

Gracious Lord, we remember that Thou didst accompany Thy two disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus. We, too, have a journey, we have a weary pilgrimage to perform. Our Emmaus is a distant though happy land. Do Thou go with us, O Lord: . . . guide us, uphold us, strengthen us, make our hearts to burn within us, and evermore manifest Thou Thyself to our souls in gracious and in heavenly power; for Thy own Name's sake we ask it. Amen.

—*Archdeacon of Raphoe, nineteenth century*

Lord Jesus, we beseech Thee, by the loneliness of Thy suffering on the cross, be nigh unto all them that are desolate, in pain or sorrow today; and let the beauty of Thy presence transform their loneliness into comfort, consolation, and holy fellowship with Thee. Lord Jesus, Thou pitiful Saviour, hear us, we beseech Thee. Amen.

—*Sursum Corda*

Wearied by the conflict of life, worn by the burden of the day, we seek Thee as our resting place. May Thy eternal calm descend upon our troubled spirits and give us all Thy peace. Amid the treacherous sands of time Thou standest still, the Rock of Ages. In life's desert places Thou, O Christ, art a spring whose waters never fail; hear us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Christ. Amen.

—*William Orchard, nineteenth century*

E. *Of Dedication*

O Thou, Who art the Light of the minds that know Thee, the Life of the souls that love Thee, and the Strength of the thoughts that seek Thee; help us so to know Thee, that we may truly love Thee, so to love Thee that we may fully serve Thee, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary, A. D. 494*

O most holy, almighty, eternal, divine Spirit, who art of one authority and dominion with the Father and the Son, set up Thy throne in our hearts, dwell within us, gather us into Thine obedience, reign over us. Thou who art Lord and Giver of life, grant us life, a long life, even life for evermore. Thou who art a loving Spirit, ever willing to give Thyself to whosoever will receive Thee, give Thyself to us, give Thyself to us more and more, and never withdraw Thyself from us. Thou who art Purity, purify us; Thou who art Light, enlighten us; Thou who art Fullness and Refreshment, make us Thine, keep us Thine, fill us, refresh us. Thou who lovest us, grant us grace to love Thee. O Lord God Almighty, most holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, who is our sole plea for any gift, for any grace, for His sake grant this prayer. Amen.

—*Christina G. Rosetti, A.D. 1830*

Enlarge our souls with a divine charity, that we may hope all things, endure all things, and become messengers of Thy healing mercy to the grievances and infirmities of men. In all things attune our hearts to the holiness and harmony of Thy Kingdom; and hasten the time when Thy Kingdom shall come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*James Martineau, A. D. 1805*

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we pray Thee suffer us not to stray from Thee, who art the Way, nor to distrust Thee, who art the Truth, nor to rest in any other thing than Thee, who art the Life. Teach us by Thy Holy Spirit whom to believe, what to do, and wherein to take our rest. For Thine own name's sake we ask it. Amen.

—*Desiderius Erasmus, A.D. 1467*

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire Thee with our whole heart, that so desiring, we may seek and find Thee; and so finding Thee we may love Thee; and loving Thee we may hate those sins from which Thou hast redeemed us; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*St. Anselm, A. D. 1033*

O God, Author of Eternal Light, do Thou shed forth continual day upon us who watch for Thee, that our lips may praise Thee, our life may bless Thee, our meditations may glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*An ancient collect, A. D. 440*

O God of strength, passing all understanding, who mercifully givest to Thy people mercy and judgment; grant to us, we beseech Thee, faithfully to love Thee, and to walk this day in the way of righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Sarum Breviary, A. D. 1085*

O God, fountain of love, pour Thy love into our souls, that we may love those whom Thou lovest with the love Thou givest us, and think and speak of them tenderly, meekly, lovingly; and so loving our brethren and sisters for Thy sake, may grow in Thy love, and dwelling in love may dwell in Thee; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

—*E. B. Pusey, A. D. 1800*

We beseech Thee, most tender Father, that Thy most living fire may purify us, that Thy most clear light may illumine us, and that Thy most pure love may so avail us, that without let or hindrance of mortal things, we may return to Thee in happiness and security; through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Saviour. Amen.

—*Vittoria Colonna, A. D. 1490*

* O God, we have known and believed the love that Thou hast for us; may we by dwelling in love dwell in Thee, and Thou in us. May we learn to love Thee whom we have not seen by loving our brethren whom we have seen. Teach us, O heavenly Father, the love wherewith Thou hast loved us. Fashion us, O blessed Lord, after Thine own example of love. Shed abroad, O Holy Spirit of love, the love of God and man in our hearts; for Thy name's sake. Amen.

—*Henry Alford, A. D. 1810*

* We can do little, dear Lord, for Thee, but do Thou great things for us. Empty us of ourselves, fill us with Thyself, exterminate in us all evil desire and longing. Purify all our motives. Humble us that our wills may be broken. Wrap us around with Thy holy fear, and bless us with a deepening and abiding contrition for our unnumbered sins, for Thine own sake. Amen.

—*Bishop Grafton, twentieth century*

O God, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary, A. D. 494*

O Saviour, pour upon us Thy spirit of meekness and love. Annihilate selfhood in us. Be Thou all our life. Guide Thou our hand which trembles exceedingly upon the Rock of Ages. Amen.

—*William Blake*

O Lord, King of heaven and earth, may it please Thee this day to order and hallow, to rule and govern, our hearts and our bodies, our thoughts, our works, and our words, according to Thy commandments, that we, being helped by Thee, may here and forever be delivered and saved; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Roman Breviary, A. D. 1099*

O Source of life and strength, many of Thy mercies do we plainly see, and we believe in a boundless store behind. None can have deeper call than we for grateful joy. Thou hast given us a life of high vocation, and Thine own breathing in our hearts interprets for us its sacred opportunities. Thou hast cheered the way with many dear affections, and glimpses of solemn beauty and everlasting truth. Not a cloud of sorrow, but Thou hast touched with glory; not a dusty atmosphere of fear but Thy light shines through: and, lest our spirits should fail before Thine unattainable perfections, Thou hast set us in the trail of Thy saints, who have learned to take up the cross of sacrifice. Let the time past suffice to have wrought our own will, and now make us consecrate all to Thine. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*James Martineau, A. D. 1805*

Preserve us blameless, O Lord, in our goings out and comings in this day. Fill us with the simplicity of a divine purpose, that we may be inwardly at one with Thy holy will, and lifted above vain wishes of our own. Set free from every detaining desire or reluctance, may we heartily surrender all in any toil, and fainting under no hardness that may befall us as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and counting it as our crown of blessing, if we may join the company of the faithful who have kept Thy name, and witnessed to Thy kingdom in every age. Prepare us to seek our rest, not in outward ease, but in inward devotedness, only fulfill to us the word of the Chief of Saints, leave us His peace while we remain here, and then receive us unto Thyself to mingle with the mighty company of our forerunners; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*James Martineau, A. D. 1805*

God of life, we thank Thee for a man's chance to live. For all the clean and wholesome joys of trained and disciplined bodies; for the ever-abiding joys of trained and disciplined minds; for the friends whose strength and true-ness add sunshine to the day, for all the happy memories of the past, the work and play of the present, the hope of fine achievements that irradiate the future, we give Thee hearty thanks. As we bow before Thee we would lift up all these in our hands and consecrate them whole-heartedly to Thy glory in the service of our fellows; not one talent unused, not one faculty undeveloped, not one opportunity neglected or grasped selfishly, but all devoted loyally to Thy will as we see it in Christ Jesus, to the growing of noble characters and the building up of a better world. Amen.

—*H. H. Tweedy, twentieth century*

O Lord God Almighty, of Thy great charity, pour down upon us a spirit of tender love to Thee, and a pitiful compassion towards all sufferers. Be Thou in every difficulty our Guide, in temptation our Defense, in weakness our Strength, in weariness our Rest; that, transformed by Thy spirit into the image of Thy holiness, we may finally attain to that blessed home of everlasting rest and joy, where Thou, O Father, with the Son, and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

—*Manual of the Guild of St. Barnabas*

Into Thy hands, O Lord, we commit ourselves this day. Give to each one of us a watchful, a humble, and a diligent spirit, that we may seek in all things to know Thy will, and when we know it may perform it perfectly and gladly to the honor and glory of Thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary*

Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life; since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy holy will, not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today. Consecrate with Thy presence the way our feet may go, and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest place be made plain. Lift us above unrighteous anger and mistrust, into faith, and hope, and charity, by a simple and steadfast reliance on Thy sure will. In all things draw us to the mind of Christ, that Thy lost image may be traced again, and Thou mayest own us as at one with Him and Thee, to the glory of Thy great name. Amen.

—*James Martineau*

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Ignatius Loyola*

F. *Of the Life Everlasting*

Grant, O Lord, that we may live in Thy fear, die in Thy favor, rest in Thy peace, rise in Thy power, reign in Thy glory; for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Archbishop Laud, seventeenth century*

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then of Thy great mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*John Henry Newman*

O Thou, whose years are throughout all generations, and who abidest though all else passes away, we pray for those whose days are far spent. Amid the shadows of evening grant them vision of Thy glorious morning. Comfort and sustain them. In their evergrowing loneliness, as friend after friend departs, be Thou to them their faithful Companion, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Give them a forward look, a joyous faith; and when life's day is ended, grant them to lie down to rest in perfect peace and in the joyous assurance that Thou hast in store for them such good things as pass man's understanding. Hear this our prayer for our Saviour's sake. Amen.

—*Samuel McComb*

Grant unto us, Almighty God, that by increase of love of that which is true, by increase of vision of that which is fair, we may know Thee more, and rising by Thy Spirit's gifts into spiritual pureness, may behold Thee, the Spirit, in spirit and in truth; and so passing on from strength to strength of human endeavor and human reaching, come to the beatific vision of God, which shall give us perfect peace. Comfort us in the hour of death, and bring us safe to the land of eternal rest. Of Thy mercy hear us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—George Dawson, A. D. 1877

G. *For Joy in the Christian Life*

O God, Author of the world's joy, Bearer of the world's pain, make us glad that we are men and that we have inherited the world's burden; deliver us from the luxury of cheap melancholy; and, at the heart of all our trouble and sorrow, let unconquerable gladness dwell; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ~~Amén.~~

—Henry S. Nash

O God, who hast folded back the mantle of the night to clothe us in the golden glory of the day; chase from our hearts all gloomy thoughts, and make us glad with the brightness of hope, that we may effectively aspire to unwon virtues, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—An ancient collect

Almighty God, grant that I may awake to the joy of this day, finding gladness in all its toil and difficulty and in its pleasure and success, in all its failures and sorrow; teach me to throw open the windows of my life, that I may look always away from myself, and behold the need of the world: give me the will and strength to bring the gift of Thy gladness to others of Thy children, that with

them I may stand to bear the burden and heat of the day and offer Thee praise of work well done: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson*

H. *For the Church*

Bless all who worship Thee, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. Of Thy goodness, give us; with Thy love, inspire us; by Thy spirit, guide us; by Thy power, protect us; in Thy mercy, receive us now and always. Amen.

—*An ancient collect, A. D. 440*

Gracious Father, we humbly beseech Thee for Thy universal church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; and where it is in error, direct it; where it is superstitious, rectify it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided and rent asunder, make up the breaches thereof, O Thou Holy One of Israel; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

—*Archbishop Laud, A. D. 1573*

I. *Before the Sermon*

O Heavenly Father, forasmuch as none can come to receive Thy holy Word, except Thou draw them by Thy gracious inspiration, we beseech Thee to pour out Thy Holy Spirit upon those who worship today in Thy holy house of prayer, that their hearts may be inclined favorably to receive, steadfastly to retain, and obediently to perform whatsoever shall be taught them in Thy name; and that they may manifest, in the dedication to Thee of their lives and substance, that thankfulness which they owe to Thee for Thy redeeming love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*R. M. Benson*

Lord Jesus, by the indwelling of Thy most holy Spirit, purge our eyes to discern and contemplate Thee until we attain to see as Thou seest, judge as Thou judgest, choose as Thou choosest, and having sought and found Thee, to behold Thee forever and ever. We ask this for Thy name's sake. Amen.

—Christina G. Rosetti

J. *After the Sermon*

Grant Thy servants, O God, to be set on fire with Thy Spirit, strengthened by Thy power, illuminated by Thy splendor, filled with Thy grace, and to go forward by Thine aid. Give them, O Lord, a right faith, perfect love, true humility. Grant, O Lord, that there may be in us simple affection, brave patience, persevering obedience, perpetual peace, a pure mind, a right and honest heart, a good will, a holy conscience, spiritual strength, a life unspotted and unblamable; and after having manfully finished our course, may we be enabled happily to enter into Thy kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Gallican Sacramentary

Into Thy hands we commend ourselves, for Thou hast redeemed us. Thou, Lord, who hast redeemed us all for Thine own sake, sanctify and save us this day. Amen.

—Christina G. Rosetti

May the strength of God pilot us. May the power of God preserve us. May the wisdom of God instruct us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us. May the shield of God defend us. May the host of God guard us against the snares of the Evil One and the temptations of the world. May Christ be with us. Christ before us. Christ in us. Christ over us. May Thy salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and for evermore. Amen.

—St. Patrick, A. D. 439

Into Thy hands, O God, we commend ourselves and all who are dear to us this day. Let the gift of Thy special Presence be with us even to its close. Grant us never to lose sight of Thee all the day long, but to worship and pray to Thee, that at eventide we may give thanks unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary*

Lord, be Thou within us, to strengthen us; without us, to keep us; above us, to protect us; beneath us, to uphold us; before us, to direct us; behind us, to keep us from straying; round about us, to defend us. Blessed be Thou, O Lord our Father, forever and ever. Amen.

—*Bishop Lancelot Andrewes*

Grant, O Lord, that what we have said with our lips, we may believe in our hearts and practice in our lives; and of Thy mercy keep us faithful unto the end; for Christ's sake. Amen.

—*John Hunter*

Infinite Father, give us, as we leave this house of prayer, absolute clearness as to what life is and what it may become. May our Lord Jesus appear as the divine Revealer of the double capacity in each one of us and as the divine Realizer, through our own obedience, of that true selfhood, God's purpose sovereign in our life. And give us the sense that the tides of the Eternal are with us when we resolve to be true. Flood our being with the grace that cannot fail, the grace that comes from Thy infinite tenderness and sympathy and divine regard for Thy children on this earth. Amen.

—*George A. Gordon*

K. *For Our Nation and All Nations*

We beseech Thee, O Lord, be gracious to our times; that both national quietness and Christian devotion may be duly maintained by Thy bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Leonine Sacramentary*

Send Thy blessing, O heavenly Father, on this our beloved land. Increase in our own and in every nation, the spirit of truth and justice, peace and godly love. Turn the hearts of all men unto Thee, and so hasten the blessed time when the kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we offer these petitions, even the same Christ Jesus Thy Son our Lord. Amen.

—*Century National Prayer Union, A. D. 1900*

God of all nations, we pray for all the peoples of Thy earth, for those who are consumed in mutual hatred and bitterness, for those who make bloody war upon their neighbors, for those who tyrannously oppress, for those who groan under cruelty and subjection. We pray thee for all who bear rule and responsibility, for child races and dying races, for the outcast tribes, the backward and down-trodden, for the ignorant, wretched, and enslaved. We beseech Thee, teach mankind to live together in peace, no man exploiting the weak, no man hating the strong, each race working out its own destiny, unfettered, self-respecting, fearless. Teach us to be worthy of freedom, free from social wrong; free from individual oppression and contempt, pure of heart and hand, despising none, defrauding none, giving to all men in all the dealings of life the honor we owe to those who are Thy children, whatever their color, their race, or their caste.

—*College of Rangoon, Burma*

VI. LECTIONARY

For ministers desiring a lectionary of Scripture readings, we recommend "A Lectionary of Scripture Readings," two-year cycle, *A Book of Worship*, pages 403-408. It can be secured through the Brethren Publishing House.

PART THREE

General Brotherhood Organization

The Church of the Brethren is rooted in a firm belief in the Bible as the Word of God. We hold the New Testament to be our "rule of faith and practice." However, in church administration situations constantly arise for which no definite policies are outlined in the Scriptures. Someone must determine these policies. In our church this responsibility rests with the members. The highest human authority in our system of government is the Annual Conference.

Through the years our administrative agencies have emerged, developed, and changed according to felt need in the life of the church. The General Mission Board, the Board of Christian Education, the General Education Board, the General Ministerial Board, and the Brethren Service Committee came to be the major administrative agencies of the general church program. A rather widespread feeling developed in the church for a simplified and unified organizational structure. In 1942 a query to the Asheville Conference started an investigation in the direction of general unification and simplification of structure. Work toward revision continued until the Wenatchee Conference of 1946, at which a rather comprehensive report on reorganization was adopted. The initial phases of this organizational structure were placed in operation in March 1947, when the new General Brotherhood Board first met, organized, and began work. Since that time further elements of the proposed reorganization or revision have been taking shape on the Brotherhood, regional, district, and local-church levels.

GENERAL BROTHERHOOD BOARD

For purposes of unity, efficiency, and economy in general Brotherhood work, there is one general board called the General Brotherhood Board of the Church of the Brethren.

1. Make-up of the Board

The General Brotherhood Board shall comprise twenty-five

members elected by Annual Conference, three to be chosen from each region and ten at large.

The only ex-officio member with ^{new} voting power on the General Brotherhood Board shall be the moderator of Annual Conference.

II. Eligibility of Board Members

Any elder, minister, or member of the laity who fulfills the qualifications herein set forth may serve on the General Brotherhood Board.

III. Qualifications of Board Members

A. Consecrated Christian living in home, church and community.

B. Active service in local church and district.

C. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the Brethren.

D. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood program.

E. Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Brotherhood problems.

F. Fitness to serve on the commissions of the Brotherhood Board.

IV. Organization of the Board

The General Brotherhood Board shall organize and select its chairman and vice-chairman and its executive committee from the regular board members. The chairman of the General Brotherhood Board shall not be chairman of any commission.

The General Brotherhood Board shall organize its work by appointing the following five commissions composed of five members each: Foreign Mission, Ministry and Home Mission, Christian Education, Brethren Service, and Finance.

The commissions shall include the following interests:

A. Foreign Mission Commission

1. Overseas extension

2. Evangelism

B. Ministry and Home Mission Commission

1. Ministry

2. Church extension

3. Evangelism

4. Rural life

5. Architectural counsel

C. Christian Education Commission

1. Church school
2. Age-group program (children's work, youth work, adult work—men's and women's work)
3. Higher education
4. Peace and moral-welfare curricular materials
5. Publications (for church school)
6. Family life education
7. Leadership education

D. Brethren Service Commission

1. Relief
2. Christian social action
3. Peace witness through goodwill projects
4. General peace action and education program of the church

E. Finance Commission

1. Conference budget building and promotion
2. Receiving and disbursing Annual Conference and authorized funds
3. Investment of Brotherhood funds
4. Conference trustees
5. Supervision of pension system

The General Brotherhood Board shall elect a general secretary to give full-time service to the supervision, promotion, and unification of the general Brotherhood program. The board shall choose a treasurer, an editor of the *Gospel Messenger*, a manager of the Publishing House, a secretary for each commission, a secretary of financial promotion, and any other personnel needed for its work.

V. Tenure of Office

Each board member shall be eligible for re-election for a second term. The normal term of office shall be for five years. A former board member is eligible for re-election one year after his retirement from the board. Any portion of a normal term shall be considered as a term.

VI. Method of Election

The Standing Committee shall nominate two persons for each vacancy. Elections shall be by majority vote of the delegate body in regular session.

VII. How the General Brotherhood Board Will Function

The General Brotherhood Board as a whole will consider the total Brotherhood program, evaluate all phases of the program, and determine the general policies and budget needs in each area of its work. It will correlate and unify the work of all commissions, and assign to the commissions the responsibility for the detailed planning of the general program in their particular areas of service.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This General Conference of the church meets annually to consider matters affecting the welfare of the whole church. The voting body consists of two sets of delegates, those from the districts, which make up Standing Committee, and those representing local congregations. All members of the Church of the Brethren present have full liberty to participate in the discussions, but only delegates vote.

The sources of business for the Conference are the local churches, the district conferences, the General Brotherhood Board, Standing Committee, and boards and committees constituted by Annual Conference. It is the privilege of any member of the church to present to a local church council any measure for Conference consideration which he believes would promote the general welfare. If approved by the church it goes to the district meeting, and if endorsed there is carried to Annual Conference.

The program of business appears in the Conference Booklet, edited by the Conference secretary, to whom all queries and reports should be sent in ample time.

Inspirational addresses, group conferences, and other features help to make these Conferences a great influence in the life of the church.

I. Constitution and Function of Standing Committee

A. Term of Service

The members of Standing Committee shall be elected for a one-year term, the term of service beginning at the first Annual Conference following election and continuing until the next Annual Conference. The members of Standing Committee may be elected to serve twice in five years but not more often, and not more than two years in succession.

B. Basis of Representation

1. State districts having under three thousand members shall be entitled to one delegate each.

2. State districts having from three thousand to six thousand members shall be entitled to two delegates each.

3. State districts having six thousand members or more shall be entitled to three delegates each.

4. The foreign districts shall be entitled to representation according to the foregoing scale.

C. Eligibility

Any elder, minister, or member of the laity who has been in the district for at least one year and who fulfills the qualifications as set forth by Annual Conference may serve the district on Standing Committee.

D. Qualifications

1. Consecrated Christian living in home, church and community.

2. Faithful service in local church and district.

3. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the Brethren.

4. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood program.

5. Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Brotherhood problems.

6. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood.

7. Acceptance of the declaration of principles and purpose as set forth in the credentials for delegates to district and general conferences of the Church of the Brethren. At present they read as follows:

a. I again declare my faith in, and grateful acceptance of, Jesus Christ, "the only begotten Son of God," as my personal Savior; and the Bible as God's infallible Word of Truth, and the New Testament as the ultimate rule of faith and practice for men (John 1: 14; 3: 16, 36; 12: 47-48; Luke 21: 33; Acts 10: 43; 2 Timothy 3: 16).

b. It is my sincere endeavor, in submission to God's Holy Spirit, to make my life, at all times, in purpose and in act, a true expression of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles (1 Corinthians 10: 31-33; Romans 12: 1-2).

c. I pledge my loyalty, my life and influence, to the Church of the Brethren and to her doctrines and practices as taught by the Scriptures and defined by her General Conference (1 Peter 1: 13-16; 3: 3-4; James 5: 12; Luke 3: 14; 1 Corinthians 6: 1-8; John 18: 20; 1 Peter 5: 13-14; John 13; 1 Corinthians 11: 1-21).

d. As a delegate to the above-named Conference, I promise prayerfully to consider with open mind and teachable spirit all matters presented, and to act, by voice and vote, in good faith, for the best

interests of the church, that she may continue to be "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17; Romans 14: 22-23).

E. Selection of Members to Standing Committee

1. In the selection of members due consideration shall be given to the choice of persons of the highest ability in the district and continuity of service on the Standing Committee as well as proper distribution of viewpoint and personnel.

2. Their qualifications shall be read each year before the selection of Standing Committee members and shall be seriously considered as the basis of their selection.

3. The Standing Committee member shall be required to secure from the clerk of the district his proper credentials to be sent to the secretary of Standing Committee.

F. Functions of Standing Committee

1. To review the conditions of the Brotherhood, to make recommendations to Annual Conference, and to take steps when necessary to conserve the unity of the Brotherhood.

2. To review the reports of the General Brotherhood Board, and to consider the problems presented by the General Brotherhood Board, regional councils, district boards, district elders' bodies, and individuals, and to make recommendations to these groups or individuals.

3. To consider the queries from districts and to suggest answers.

4. To serve as the nominating committee for Annual Conference officers, General Brotherhood Board members, and Annual Conference committees. The Standing Committee may use its own procedures in preparing the ballot. Further nominations may be made from the floor by the delegate body.

G. Voting Privileges

Only those who represent districts on Standing Committee are eligible to make motions, to make nominations, or to vote.

II. Constitution and Function of the Delegate Body

A. Eligibility

1. Any member of the Church of the Brethren who fulfills the qualifications as interpreted by Annual Conference is eligible to serve.

2. It is suggested, in order to have a large lay representation in the delegate body, that when local churches send two delegates one delegate should be from the laity.

3. Each congregation having a membership of two hundred or fewer may send one delegate; each congregation having more than

two hundred may send one additional for each two hundred or fraction thereof.

B. Qualifications

1. Consecrated Christian living in home, church and community.
2. Faithful service in local church and district.
3. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the Brethren.
4. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood program.
5. Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Brotherhood problems.
6. Acceptance of the declaration of principles and purposes as set forth in the credentials for delegates to district and general conferences of the Church of the Brethren.

C. Credentials

1. The Standing Committee delegate credential blank should indicate that the delegate whose name it bears has been chosen on the basis of the specified qualifications, and indicate the membership of the district and the number of its delegates.

2. Credential blanks for delegates from the church shall be sent, along with other literature from the Publishing House, to each pastor or minister of each church, or shall appear in an issue of the *Messenger* a few weeks before each Annual Conference.

3. Each delegate shall be required to present the regular credential properly signed, before being seated, unless in the judgment of the credential committee there are justifiable reasons for making an exception.

4. Proper identification and seating of the delegates should be arranged by such provisions as special badges, a recognition ceremony, or special seating areas.

D. Functions of the Delegate Body

1. It is the final authority of the Brotherhood in all matters of procedure, program, polity, and discipline.

2. It elects the officers of the Annual Conference, the members of the General Brotherhood Board, and the members of special committees and commissions authorized by the Brotherhood. These elections are made from nominations presented to the delegate body by the Standing Committee.

3. It reviews the work of the Brotherhood as presented to Annual Conference in the reports of the General Brotherhood Board through its commissions and of the institutions of the Brotherhood.

4. It projects the program of the Brotherhood, determining the new fields of endeavor, plans for advance, size of budget, and all other necessary matters.

5. It disposes of queries.

6. It receives the reports of committees or commissions appointed to deal with specific problems in the life of the Brotherhood.

7. It determines what resolutions shall be the voice of the Brotherhood on the problems of the day.

E. Voting Privileges

Only those who represent churches or are members of Standing Committee are eligible to vote.

III. Moderator

A. Qualifications

1. Consecrated Christian living in home, church and community.

2. Faithful service in local church and district.

3. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the Brethren.

4. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood program.

5. Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Brotherhood problems.

6. Acceptance of the declaration of principles and purpose as set forth in the credentials for members to district and general conferences of the Church of the Brethren.

7. Familiarity with parliamentary procedures and skill in presiding over a deliberative assembly.

8. Capacity to cultivate desirable public relations.

9. Demonstrated leadership ability in Brotherhood program.

B. Eligibility and Tenure

1. The moderator must be an ordained elder or an ordained minister.

2. Any elder or minister in the Church of the Brethren is eligible to be moderator.

3. The moderator may serve not more than one term in five years.

C. Method of Election

The Standing Committee shall present at least two nominees.

Further nominations may be made by the delegate body. A majority vote is necessary for election.

D. Functions

1. To preside over all sessions of Standing Committee and of Annual Conference, and to act as the official representative of the church.

2. To contact district, regional, and other Brotherhood conferences.

3. To serve ex officio as a member of the General Brotherhood Board, unless he is already a member.

4. To represent the Brotherhood at strategic inter-church conferences.

5. To serve as a member of the Conference program committee.

6. To give a "state of the church" address at Annual Conference.

7. To serve as a member of the Annual Conference locating committee.

IV. *Alternate Moderator*

The alternate moderator shall act as moderator in case the elected moderator cannot serve. He shall serve for the moderator at his request in presiding over Standing Committee and Annual Conference, contacting regional and district conferences, and representing the Brotherhood at strategic inter-church conferences. The method of nomination, election, and tenure shall be the same as for the moderator.

V. *The Writing Clerk or Secretary*

A. Qualifications and Tenure

1. He shall be an ordained elder or minister.

2. He shall be elected for a three-year term.

B. Functions

He shall record the minutes of Standing Committee and of Annual Conference and shall publish the Annual Conference minutes. He shall interpret the actions of the Annual Conference on problems of the church. He shall serve as a member of the Annual Conference program committee and of the Annual Conference locating committee. He shall approve the payment of all withdrawals from the Annual Conference treasury.

VI. *The Reader*

The Standing Committee shall elect a reader from among their number who shall become the reader of Annual Conference. He shall not serve more than one year in five. The reader shall read distinctly all papers as often as requested.

VII. The Program Committee

The program committee shall consist of the moderator of Annual Conference, a staff member selected by the General Brotherhood Board, who may be selected to serve for two years and cannot succeed himself, three members nominated by Standing Committee and elected by Annual Conference for three years with one member's term expiring each year. No member may succeed himself who has served a three-year term. The writing clerk shall be an ex-officio member of this committee.

The program committee shall prepare and publish the program of the Annual Conference, and shall provide the necessary supervision for the most effective presentation of the program.

VIII. The Conference Treasurer

The treasurer of the General Brotherhood Board shall be designated as the Annual Conference treasurer.

IX. The Locating Committee

The locating committee shall be composed of the moderator, the clerk, and the staff member of the Conference program committee, together with the regional board in the region where the Conference is to be held.

THE REGION

The 1936 Annual Conference established a procedure whereby each of the five regions could set up a functional organization. Since that time the regions have moved forward—each of them with a regional board, an executive committee, and employed executive leadership. The details of the organization vary with each region.

I. Organization by Regions

The Brotherhood is composed of five regions: namely, the Southeastern Region, the Eastern Region, the Central Region, the Western Region, and the Pacific Coast Region.

The Southeastern Region is composed of the following districts: Florida and Georgia; Maryland, Eastern; Maryland, Middle; Maryland, Western; North and South Carolina; Tennessee and Alabama; Virginia, Eastern; Virginia, First; Virginia, Northern; Virginia, Second; Virginia, Southern; West Virginia, First; West Virginia, Second.

The Eastern Region is composed of the following districts:

North Atlantic; Pennsylvania, Eastern; Pennsylvania, Middle; Pennsylvania, Southern; Pennsylvania, Western.

The Central Region is composed of the following districts: Illinois, Northern, and Wisconsin; Illinois, Southern; Indiana, Middle; Indiana, Northern; Indiana, Southern; Michigan; Ohio, Northeastern; Ohio, Northwestern; Ohio, Southern.

The Western Region is composed of the following districts: Colorado; Iowa, Middle; Iowa, Northern, Minnesota, and South Dakota; Iowa, Southern; Kansas, Northeastern; Kansas, Northwestern; Kansas, Southeastern; Kansas, Southwestern; Missouri, Middle; Missouri, Northern; Missouri, Southern, and Arkansas; Nebraska; North Dakota and Eastern Montana; Oklahoma, Panhandle of Texas, and New Mexico; Texas and Louisiana.

The Pacific Coast Region is composed of the following districts: California, Northern; California, Southern, and Arizona; Canada; Idaho and Western Montana; Oregon; Washington.

II. Regional Organization

A. The Regional Board

1. Constitution of the Board

The regional board shall be constituted of the members of the General Brotherhood Board who reside in the region and at least one representative from each district of the region elected or appointed in district meeting for at least a three-year tenure. The presidents of the colleges and the seminary president shall be members of the board in their respective regions. The regional board may have the representatives of the functional program of the region as members of the board in an advisory capacity and without voting privilege.

2. Function of the Board

a. The function of the board shall be to interpret, to co-ordinate, and to promote the total program of the church.

b. The board shall assume responsibility for the enlistment, placement, and supervision of the pastors in the region. In so doing, it shall communicate and co-operate with the General Brotherhood Board and work through district and local church ministerial representatives.

c. The board shall plan and promote the regional conference.

d. The board shall represent the region on the locating committee for Annual Conference when it is held in that region. Other members shall be the moderator and the clerk of Annual Conference and the staff member of the Conference program committee. This committee shall set the place and the time for Annual Conference.

e. The board shall choose the regional secretary with the approval of the General Brotherhood Board. The board shall select other workers as needed.

f. The board shall aid in planning the regional program and shall supervise the workers of the region.

3. Relation of Region to District and Brotherhood

The relation of the regional to the Brotherhood program is that of creative implementation; to the district program it is that of co-ordination and stimulation.

4. Function of the Regional Secretary

The following functions are suggested and such other functions may be added as deemed acceptable by the several regional boards and supervised by the boards:

a. To promote the total church program in the region.

b. To counsel with churches, ministers, district boards, and group organizations regarding the church program.

c. To co-operate with the General Brotherhood Board and the district boards in organizing and promoting church extension.

d. To aid district boards and the ministerial secretary in the enlistment, supervision and placement of ministers, unless the board shall choose to designate another person to assume these responsibilities.

e. To cultivate desirable public relations for the colleges and to interpret the college program in the districts.

B. The Regional Conference

The purpose of the regional conference is to give inspiration, education, and fellowship; to vitalize the church program in the districts and the local churches; to interpret the Brotherhood program and emphases.

THE DISTRICT

Local congregations are grouped according to convenience into districts. There are (1955) forty-eight in the United States, one in Canada, two in India, one in China, and one in Nigeria, a total of fifty-three districts.

The districts have their boards and committees to administer their work. Until recent years there was usually a multiple-board set-up, representing the interests of Christian education, home missions, and ministry, often with a co-ordinating arrangement known as a council of boards.

The trend is toward one administrative board, patterned some-

what after the General Brotherhood Board. The directory of churches in the *Yearbook* lists the organization with the personnel for the various districts.

Following is a suggested plan for a district using a board of administration:

I. District Board

A. Personnel

It is recommended that the district give consideration to establishing one board which shall be called the district board. The district board shall be composed of at least five members elected by district conference. The moderator, the treasurer, and the clerk of district meeting shall be ex-officio members without vote. The district board may have advisory groups representing the functional program of the district without voting privilege.

The term of service shall be three years with no member serving more than two terms in succession.

The board shall organize by electing a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a secretary.

B. Functions

1. To encourage and vitalize the local churches through: the promotion of evangelism; the creating of new churches; the making of surveys; the directing of peace and moral-welfare education; the organization of age-group programs; the promoting of leadership education, group meetings of ministers for inspiration and fellowship, district rallies, summer camps, work camps, stewardship education; the developing of Christian home life, etc.

2. To promote and supervise the Brotherhood program in the district.

3. To co-operate with the regional board and the General Brotherhood Board in the supervision and location of pastors.

4. To select the district fieldworker and other personnel when authorized by the district board, to define his duties, and to supervise his work.

5. To hold and administer the funds of the district.

6. To hold title to district church property.

7. To plan and promote the district conference.

II. The District Elders' Body

A. Personnel

1. The district elders' body shall be composed of ordained elders and moderators of local congregations. The elders' body may extend

the privileges of the meeting to visiting elders and moderators of local congregations outside of the district.

B. Functions

1. It shall receive reports of the conditions of the churches and shall make recommendations to district meetings in behalf of the spiritual welfare of the churches.

2. It shall be responsible for the ordination of ministers and elders.

3. It shall act as the board of appeal for individual members and for local congregations.

4. It is responsible for the counseling and discipline of ministers and elders.

5. When the authority of the elder or moderator is disputed, the elder, moderator, minister, congregation, or board of administration may refer the dispute to the elders' body for decision.

6. The district elders' body shall initiate action in any situation in which it feels it necessary.

7. The authority of the elders' body over moderators of local churches shall be the same as that over ordained elders.

III. The District Conference

The purpose of the district conference is to provide education, inspiration, and fellowship; to vitalize the local church program; to interpret the regional and Brotherhood programs and to transact the business of the district; to serve as the vehicle by which the concerns of local congregations are passed on to the Annual Conference.

IV. The Moderator of District Conference

A. Eligibility

Any elder or ordained minister of the church who meets the qualifications herein set forth may be elected moderator of the district conference. He shall not serve more than once in three years.

B. Qualifications

1. Consecrated Christian living in home, church, and community.

2. Faithful service in local church and district.

3. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the Brethren.

4. A working knowledge and understanding of the Brotherhood program.

5. Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Brotherhood problems.

6. Acceptance of the declaration of principles and purposes as set forth in the credentials for delegates to district and general conferences of the Church of the Brethren.

7. Familiarity with parliamentary procedures and skill in presiding over a deliberative assembly.

8. Capacity to cultivate desirable public relations.

9. Demonstrated leadership ability in the Brotherhood program.

C. Duties

1. He shall preside at business sessions of the district conference.

2. He shall serve as an ex-officio member of the district board.

3. He shall study carefully the need of the district.

4. He shall serve on the program committee of the district conference.

5. He shall deliver a "state of the church" address at district conference.

V. Duties of Standing Committee Members in the Districts

These members shall interpret the decisions and recommendations of Annual Conference to the delegates of the district conference in a written report, in addition to their report to the elders' body. When called upon they shall interpret the decisions to local churches.

VI. Duties of the Clerk of District Conference

The clerk shall record the minutes of the district conference and prepare them for publication, interpret the minutes of the district conference on the various problems as they arise in the district business sessions, and conserve the records of the district in co-operation with the district board. The clerk shall serve for a three-year term. The district shall determine whether he shall be elected to succeed himself.

VII. Duties of the Reader

The reader shall read distinctly all papers as often as requested.

VIII. The Treasurer

There shall be one district treasurer, who shall have custody of all district capital funds, district endowments, and district annuities, as well as all other funds and moneys coming into the district from whatever source. The district treasurer should be elected for a term of three years, and should be required to make bond in a sum sufficient to safeguard all funds which may come into his hands. The district shall determine whether he shall be elected to succeed himself.

IX. The Delegate Body

A. It is the final authority of the district in all matters of procedure, program, polity, and discipline.

B. It elects the officers of the district conference, the members of special committees or commissions authorized by the district, and members of the district board when so authorized.

C. It reviews the work of the district as presented to the Annual Conference in the reports of the boards and committees of the district.

D. It projects the program of the district, determining the new fields of endeavor, plans for advance, size of budget, and all other necessary matters.

E. It disposes of queries which come to the district conference.

F. It receives the reports of committees or commissions appointed to deal with specific problems in the life of the district.

G. It determines what resolutions shall be the voice of the district on the problems of the day.

PROPERTY HOLDINGS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

I. Local

For the sake of uniformity and greater security in ownership of Church of the Brethren property, the title to all local church property should be held by local trustees, in trust, for the teaching and dissemination of the gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the beliefs, practices, and doctrines of the Church of the Brethren as set forth and promulgated from time to time by Annual Conference.

A. Make-up of Trustees

The trustees should consist of three members of the local church who are in good standing, and each member should be elected for a period of three years.

B. Method of Election

The trustees should be elected by the local church at a regular or called business session of the members thereof.

C. Method of Succession

The terms of the trustees should expire successively, thereby necessitating the election of a new member each year; retiring trustees should be eligible for re-election, if deemed wise by the local church; in case of a vacancy caused by death, resignation, or removal to some other church, or in the case of failure to act, steps should be taken by

the local church to supply the deficiency as soon as practical after the deficiency occurs; in cases in which a vacancy is not filled upon the expiration of the term of any one of the trustees, the old member so affected will hold over until his successor has been duly elected.

D. Duties of the Trustees

The primary duty of the trustees shall be that of holding title to all local church property, in trust, as set out in paragraph one above, which shall conform to the legal requirements of the various states, territories, or other possessions of the United States, or foreign countries; as such, the trustees shall take, hold, and convey title to any and all real estate belonging to the local church.

E. Other Duties

The local church may, if it sees fit to do so, impose other duties and responsibilities upon the trustees, such as caring for the building and grounds, remodeling and building new structures, etc. However, in such cases specific authority should be given by the local church, as in cases where other individuals are chosen to perform some specific duties for the local church.

F. Gifts, Bequests, etc.

When the local church receives property by gift or bequest, it should be the duty of the trustees to take title to same and hold the property, in trust, as in the case of property bought by the local church.

G. Transfer of Church Property

When it is deemed wise or advantageous to the local church to sell or otherwise dispose of a particular piece of property, the conveyance should be executed by the trustees in their trust capacity, under the direction of the local church and with the approval of the district board of the district in which the local church is located.

H. Closed or Abandoned Church Property

In cases where local churches have been closed or where the property has been abandoned by the removal of the membership to other places, by death or otherwise, the district board should intervene and give aid and counsel in the matter of the proper disposition of the properties thus affected, to the end that title thereto may vest in the district board, as trustees for the district.

I. Uniform Procedure in Conveyance

1. All property acquired by the local church should be transferred in accordance with the provisions set forth in the introductory paragraph above.

2. Restrictive covenants should be contained in all deeds of conveyance, as follows:

a. That if the property ever ceases to be used in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph one, or in cases where the local church has been closed or the property abandoned, the district conference of the district in which the local church is located may, upon the recommendation of the district board, assert title to the property and have the same vested in the district board, as trustees for the district.

b. That before a legal title to the property can be conveyed, consent of the district board must first be secured, and the deed of conveyance must have affixed thereto the signatures and acknowledgements of the executive officers of the board.

J. Return of Property to Local Churches

In cases where the aforementioned restrictive covenant providing for the divestiture of title to property owned by the local church results in the title being vested in the district board, as trustees, it is understood that this action is taken only as a means of conserving for the Church of the Brethren property which has been purchased and developed by consecrated effort, and in many cases at great sacrifice by individuals who have been loyal to the principles as set out in paragraph one, and that the properties thus affected, or their equivalent, shall be held in trust by the district board with the understanding that they shall be promptly returned to the local church, if and when the reasons for the divestiture of title to said properties are removed; it is further understood that until such time as the said reasons are removed, the district board will use the affected properties in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph one, and for the best interests of the Church of the Brethren.

K. Examination of Title to Local Church Property

The district board, in co-operation with local churches, should secure the assistance of competent legal counsel and examine the title to all local church property located within its respective district, and where no legal title exists, by the property being deeded in the name of the local church, or otherwise, without the power vested in one or more individuals to convey title, assistance should be given the local church in the matter of effecting a legal title to its property; and secondly, where a legal title does exist, the local church should co-operate with the recommendations herewith made by incorporating in its deeds the restrictive covenants set forth under section I, above.

L. Charters of Incorporation

In cases where local church property has been duly incorporated under state law, it is not necessary to provide trustees, inasmuch as the officers of the corporation are legally clothed with the power and authority to convey title; therefore, it is not necessary where charters of incorporation have been provided that the charters be dissolved. In deference to the plan of providing trustees, rather than charters of incorporation, the former plan seems to be more universally adaptable to the holding of local church property because of its simplicity. However, in cases where charters of incorporation have been provided, in order to safeguard the interests of the Church of the Brethren, the local church, under the direction of the district board, should effect a trust agreement with the district in which it is located, providing for the divestment of title to its property, for the reasons and under the conditions set forth under section I, and in keeping with the recommendations made in section K.

II. District

For the sake of uniformity and greater security in ownership of Church of the Brethren property, the title to all district church property should be held by the district board in trust, for the teaching and dissemination of the gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the beliefs, practices, and doctrines of the Church of the Brethren, as set forth and promulgated from time to time by Annual Conference.

A. Gifts, Bequests, etc.

When the district receives property by gift or bequest, it shall be the duty of the district board to take title to same, and hold the property, in trust, as in case of property purchased by the district.

B. District Property

When it is deemed wise or advantageous to the district to buy, sell, or otherwise dispose of a particular piece of property, the conveyance shall be executed by the district board, in its trust capacity, with the approval of district conference.

C. Closed or Abandoned Church Property

In cases where local churches have been closed, or where the property has been abandoned by the removal of the membership to other places, by death or otherwise, the district board shall intervene in the matter of the proper disposition of the properties thus affected, to the end that title thereto may vest in the district board, to be held in trust for the district.

D. Uniform Procedure in Conveyance

1. All property acquired by the district should be transferred in accordance with the provisions set forth in the introductory paragraph above.

2. A restrictive covenant should be contained in all deeds of conveyance, as follows:

That before a legal title to the property can be conveyed, consent of the district conference must first be secured, and the deed of conveyance must have affixed thereto the signatures and acknowledgements of the moderator and the clerk of district conference, in addition to the duly authorized signatures and acknowledgements of the members of the district board.

E. Examination of Title to All Local and District Property

The district board, in co-operation with local churches and the assistance of competent legal counsel, should familiarize itself with the status of the title to all local and district properties, as recommended under sections K and L, Part I, and in cases where necessary changes in the deeds of conveyance should be made in order that all local and district properties may be conserved for the best interests of the Church of the Brethren.

F. Budgets

The district board should have charge of all district budgets; all budgets recommended by the board should be ratified by district conference.

CHURCH BOARDS, DEPARTMENTS, AND COMMITTEES

1. *Pension Board* (Annual Meeting minutes, 1943, 1945, 1948, 1951)

A. Ministerial and Missionary Pension Plan

The Pension Board was organized by the Annual Conference in 1943, when the church for the first time approved a pension plan for its ministers and missionaries. The plan is known as a contributory reserve plan with retirement benefit determined by total accumulation at retirement. The plan calls for the minister or missionary to contribute four and the employer to contribute six per cent of salary, including fifteen per cent for free use of parsonage, for retirement at age sixty-five. The board is comprised of the twenty-five individuals and the Annual Conference moderator, who serve as members of the General Brotherhood Board.

B. Ministerial and Missionary Service Fund

An older fund is the Ministerial and Missionary Service Fund

established by the decision of Annual Conference in 1904 and placed under the administration of the Pension Board in 1945. Whereas the Pension Fund is a retirement fund built up by regular contributions by the individual and the church or board employing him, the Ministerial and Missionary Service Fund is intended to help care for aged and/or infirm ministers and missionaries or their widows who are left without adequate means of support.

This fund is composed of cash donations, income from endowments, and money received through bequests, annuities, or as special gifts.

In order to receive grants from this fund, applicants must have served the church actively and faithfully as ministers or missionaries. Special consideration is given for long-time service to the church. All applicants for such grants must be members of the Church of the Brethren in good standing in their home congregations and districts.

Applications for grants are made to the Pension Board on printed forms furnished by the board. It is the duty of the board to investigate carefully the needs of each applicant, including his means of support, and property ownership.

Upon the death of the beneficiary the grant payments cease. A widow of a minister or a missionary may receive a grant from the fund, provided her application is received on the regular printed forms, subject to the usual investigation.

No indebtedness shall be incurred on account of the fund. All grants are made subject to the resources of the fund.

II. Tract Committee

In 1927 Annual Conference discontinued the Tract Examining Committee, placing tract publication and distribution in the hands of the General Mission Board.

Since 1947, tract publication is administered by the General Brotherhood Board. Income from an endowment of something over \$20,000 is used to print and distribute Brethren tracts.

Lists of available tracts and the tracts themselves may be ordered from the Brethren Publishing House.

III. Gish Publishing Fund

The Gish Publishing Fund was established in 1899, when the estate of James and Barbara Gish, valued at approximately \$50,000, was given to the General Mission Board. Through the income from this fund books and other helpful reading matter have been made available to the ministers and missionaries of the Church of the Brethren.

Between May 15, 1899, and June 5, 1944, the books offered at reduced prices were selected by a committee of three known as the Gish Fund Committee, appointed by the General Mission Board.

At present (1951) these funds are used to make books available to ministers and missionaries in two ways. First, any book desired may be ordered at a substantial discount. Second, through the Brethren Ministers' Book of the Month Club a selection is made each month and announced ahead in the *Gospel Messenger*. Members of the club receive these selections at a discount somewhat larger than the regular Gish Fund discount.

IV. Men's Work

Men's Work had its origin in the Church of the Brethren in 1926, at which time Annual Conference recognized it as an integral part of the church, and authorized it as an official church organization. Men's Work functions in co-operation with the Adult Council of the church, and as an auxiliary organization under the Commission of Christian Education.

The organization of Men's Work consists of a General Council of fifteen members. Three members of the council are chosen from each of the five regions of the church. The term of office of councilmen is three years; thus one new councilman is elected from each region each year. Councilmen are recommended by the men of their region, nominated by the men at their annual meeting in connection with the Annual Conference; the nominations are approved first by the Standing Committee and later by the delegates of Conference.

The general officers of Men's Work consist of a president, three vice-presidents, a recording secretary, and an executive secretary. Each of the above officers is elected for a term of one year, with the exception of the recording secretary, who is elected for a term of three years. The treasurer of the General Brotherhood Board serves as the treasurer of Men's Work.

Local, district and regional organizations are recommended. Each functions in its particular sphere, and all attempt to carry out the policies approved yearly by the General Council. All projects of Men's Work are for the purpose of strengthening the entire program of the church and furtherance of the policies outlined and approved by the general church.

The purpose of Men's Work is to strengthen the ties of Christian fellowship among the men of the church and to help men find a larger place in the activities of the church. Men's Work should help men and boys in finding a "man's approach to religion," and in so

doing add interest in the church program for all participating therein.

Literature concerning organization, administration, and projects for the men of the church can always be obtained from the executive secretary of the Council of Men's Work.

V. Women's Work

Women's Work in the Church of the Brethren was begun in the early days of the church. In 1885 the first formal organization took place. Missionary reading circles, and missionary projects grew to include mothers and daughters groups; later came Bible study, peace, and temperance. A national financial project, begun in 1932 in support of girls' schools in India, has grown to include the total Brotherhood program. Likewise, in its program emphases Women's Work seeks to participate in the total program of the church.

The national voting body consists of all the women assembled at the regular Annual Conference. The National Council of Women's Work is made up of four members: president, director of aid, director of missions, and director of homebuilders. Election is by ballot upon recommendations of the nominating committee.

A secretary is employed by the General Brotherhood Board to serve under the direction of the National Council of Women's Work to share in implementation of the program.

The regional and district organization of Women's Work is similar to the national, described above. Locally, dependent on the size of the congregation, the organization and program may be simple to fit the need.

The Manual for Women's Work Groups (1950) gives more complete information regarding the organization.

VI. Pastors' Association

The Annual Conference of 1931 approved the Pastors' Association. The officers of the association consist of president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer, each elected by the association for a term of three years and approved by Conference.

The association holds an inspirational and business session at Annual Conference, at which time special problems are considered as they relate to the work of the ministry. When changes in ministerial polity are desired, they are submitted to the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board.

VII. Historical Committee

Annual Conference of 1945 recognized the growing interest in Brethren history by appointing a Historical Commission of five mem-

bers. The commission was given oversight of the Brethren Historical Library at 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois.

With the coming of the new Brotherhood organization of 1946 the name was changed to Historical Committee. This committee is now appointed by and responsible to the Christian Education Commission of the General Brotherhood Board. The committee is eager to encourage Brotherhood-wide interest in Brethren data; it also seeks to gather and preserve Brethren historical materials and information.

VIII. Brotherhood-Owned and -Related Institutions

A. Brethren Publishing House

The private printing project which was begun by Henry Kurtz in 1851 in the attic of a springhouse near Poland, Ohio, has grown through the years to become the church-owned Brethren Publishing House located at 16-24 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois. In 1897 the Publishing House was transferred to church ownership. Its primary task is to publish the *Gospel Messenger* (the official organ of the Church of the Brethren), the Brethren Sunday-school papers and quarterlies, pamphlets, and books devoted to the interests of the church. The home offices of the General Brotherhood Board and committees are located in the Brethren Publishing House building.

In December 1946 the legal name of the Publishing House was changed from *Brethren Publishing House* to *House of the Church of the Brethren*. However, the name, *Brethren Publishing House*, is still being used on all correspondence and invoices, except on legal documents.

B. Bethany Biblical Seminary (Annual Meeting minutes, 1924, 1925)

Bethany Biblical Seminary is owned, supported, and directed by the Church of the Brethren. This institution was founded as Bethany Bible School in Chicago, Illinois, on October 3, 1905, by Brethren A. C. Wicand and E. B. Hoff. At the Annual Conference of 1925, held at Winona Lake, Indiana, the Church of the Brethren assumed full ownership of Bethany as its officially authorized theological seminary and Bible training school. In 1931 the name of the graduate school was changed to *Bethany Biblical Seminary*. In 1940 the institution was granted full accreditation as a standard theological seminary by the American Association of Theological Schools.

The name *Bethany* in reality means two institutions. Bethany Biblical Seminary as a graduate professional school admits only college

graduates and offers courses leading to the Master of Religious Education and Bachelor of Divinity degrees. Bethany Bible Training School offers undergraduate theological work for mature church workers who cannot attend college, but who desire to prepare for pastoral and church-school work. The curriculum of Bethany is designed to equip ministers, ministers' wives, church-school teachers, missionaries, musicians, fieldworkers, camp leaders, counselors, and college teachers of Bible for their responsibilities.

The board of trustees of Bethany Biblical Seminary is composed of ten elected members. One member is nominated by the alumni association and approved by Annual Conference. Nine members are nominated by Standing Committee and elected by Annual Conference: three members representing the colleges, three members representing the ministry, three members from the laity of the church. The president of the seminary is an ex-officio member of this board. Each member is elected for a three-year term of office. The tenure rule of two successive terms applies to these offices.

C. Colleges

The Church of the Brethren maintains six colleges for the higher education of its youth: namely, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia; Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania; La Verne College, La Verne, California; Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana; and McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas. Each of these institutions is directed by its own board of trustees, but overhead guidance is given by the Christian Education Commission of the General Brotherhood Board. The colleges are given a token support from the Brotherhood Fund but receive their principal financial support from the constituency residing in the respective college territories.

D. Bethany Hospital

A growing concern and desire for a Brethren ministry to the physical ills of mankind led to the founding of Bethany Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, on November 15, 1920. It was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation under the corporation name, *Bethany Sanitarium and Hospital*.

While it was organized and is operated as a separate and distinct corporation, its control is vested in the "members" of the corporation, through their elected trustees who "pledge themselves to hold all the property and funds of said corporation in trust for the Church of the Brethren" (Annual Meeting minutes, 1950).

PART FOUR

The Local Church

The local church is the basic unit in the entire church organization. The work of the Kingdom succeeds or fails depending upon the degree of effectiveness with which the local church discharges its task. While the gospel is "the same yesterday, today and forever," the methods by which the redeeming ministries of the church are channeled to human need will vary with local conditions and changing times. Servants of the Lord must be alert to needs, quick to change that which needs changing, and creative in their approach to each local situation. Theirs is the task of making the timeless timely. Through efficient organization the right people are set at the several tasks, responsibility is systematically placed, programs are devised, and goals for the promotion of the Kingdom of God are set up.

MEMBERSHIP

The greatest human resource of the church is its total membership. The Annual Conference of 1932 classified the members thus:

I. Resident and Nonresident Members

1. A resident member is one who holds membership in the congregation where he lives.
2. A nonresident member is one who lives outside the territorial bounds of the congregation in which he holds his membership.

II. Active and Inactive Members

1. An active member is one who avails himself of the public means of grace by attending some regular church service, or a communion service, or contributes to the support of the gospel and the various enterprises in such ways as he is able.
2. Any member who without sufficient reason shall fail to comply with the requirements for active membership for two consecutive years, after earnest but ineffectual effort by the church to arouse the member to the observance of his vows, may, by action of the church or the membership committee, be recorded in a separate list as inactive, until such time as he shall again become active. A minister who is placed on the inactive membership list shall not have his name appear on the ministerial list of the *Yearbook* until he again becomes active.

III. *Absent Membership*

Any member whose residence cannot be ascertained for three consecutive years shall have his name placed on an absent list and shall not be counted in the statistical list.

IV. *Budget Basis*

Only active members, both resident and nonresident, shall be counted in making up the budget for District and General Conference.

V. *Membership Termination*

Membership in the Church of the Brethren may be terminated by death, withdrawal, expulsion, or by letter of transfer.

TRANSFER OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

I. *Preliminary Statements*

1. The church is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ and is called, by Paul, "the church of the living God." "God is love," and through His grace and the meritorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ this relationship has been made available to all men everywhere. Faith, repentance, and obedience enable men of all stations in life, through the Holy Spirit, to enjoy fellowship with God and one another and thus become the *universal church*.

2. Denominations (of which there are said to be more than two hundred) have arisen as a result of differing interpretations of theology; disagreement as to the number and purpose of religious symbols (sacraments); the forms and authority of church polity; and the varieties of church organization. In the early church these divisions were not known. Neither was this condition in the purpose of Christ, who prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

3. Church letters of transfer represent the method by which a denomination maintains the location and tabulation of its membership within the organization. They have no specific value other than this. The system does not guarantee Christian discipleship. It is but a formal statement announcing such profession. "The Lord knows those that are his," and relationship with his spiritual body is neither hindered nor abetted by letters of transfer.

4. A letter of transfer is the property of the congregation and should be so understood by all concerned. Its main purpose is to register, promote and safeguard transfer of membership from one congregation to another within the denomination. The letter of

transfer should go from the granting to the receiving congregation. The system of allowing the individual to carry the letter of transfer, in the case of timid or careless individuals, has frequently caused a lapse in church membership. Congregations need a more dependable plan in their attempt to serve the increasing mobile membership and to keep records more reliable and up-to-date. The time between the move and the new contacts on the part of those who are changing membership should be reduced to a minimum.

5. The matter of transfer by letter is simplified and provides less occasion for cavil or criticism when it is understood (a) as registering a change of location on the part of the member, and (b) as serving to introduce the member to the receiving congregation. The time of the transfer of membership should not be the occasion for disciplinary methods. Many have been estranged and lost to the denomination, unnecessarily, by such procedure.

II. The Method of Transfer

1. When members change congregational residence, the the congregation in which they have lived shall send a letter of transfer, without delay, to the pastor or elder (moderator) of the congregation in whose territory they intend to move or have moved unless the member requests that his membership remain with the former congregation. A personal friendly letter should be written to the party or parties to the effect that a letter of transfer has been sent to the other congregation, informing the pastor of the change and requesting that as soon as possible they should attend the services in the new congregation and create new fellowship. A copy of the letter should be sent to the pastor or elder (moderator) of the receiving congregation.

2. This plan, if it is to be both corrective and effective, requires that members of a congregation should be made familiar with the meaning and method of transfer. Also, that the officers of congregations maintain such fellowship and oversight with the membership as will enable them to check the movements of their members with relative accuracy. Members planning to change location should, if at all possible, confer with the pastor or elder (moderator) prior to moving.

3. If and when the granting congregation is uncertain as to the name of the congregation to which a letter of transfer should be sent (as may happen when members move without leaving proper information) the office of the regional secretary should assist in clearing the situation.

4. When members move and desire to place their membership (for justifiable reasons) in a congregation of some other denomination, the regular form of transfer may be used. The form should be prepared so as to be suitable for use within the brotherhood, or in transfer to another denomination.

In either case a letter of explanation, with sufficient detail to be understandable, should be given the party that is moving and also a copy explaining conditions should be sent to the receiving congregation.

In all cases, a file of the type of transfer should be kept by the issuing congregation so that future references, if necessary, would be intelligible.

5. A special form should be used for officials (elders, ministers, licentiates, deacons). This form should be used when the official and membership fellowship is being transferred to another congregation within the denomination. However, when denominational lines are crossed, official standing is fully at the option of the receiving denomination.

NOTE: It is not implied that the Annual Conference encourages the actions listed in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Article II. They are inserted as a guide when such conditions arise.

Answer of 1951 Annual Conference: Report accepted as revised. Former decisions in conflict with it are considered repealed.

ORGANIZING AND DIVIDING CHURCHES

The growth of the church as a whole depends much upon developing new congregations. The Conference of 1920 made decisions in regard to organizing and dividing churches, summarized as follows:

1. Organization of New Churches

A body of members or the district ministry and home mission commission may call for organization when, in the judgment of the said commission, local conditions of the place from which the call comes justify such organization. (It is recommended that the counsel of comity commissions of councils of churches be sought and considered.)

The call for organization shall be in charge of the ministry and home mission commission of the district and the organization effected by them or elders whom they may appoint. A moderator in charge and such officials as may be deemed advisable, shall be elected.

The new organization shall then be reported to the district meeting, and after its acceptance, its delegates shall be seated in the district conference.

II. Dividing Organized Churches

If a majority of an organized church decides to divide, they shall call to their council meeting one or more adjoining elders, and at least one of the members of the district ministry and home mission commission, who shall assist in determining lines, division of church property, etc., and in the election of a moderator for each of the new organizations and other officers, if deemed advisable. The new organizations shall then be reported to district meeting, and recognition be obtained, after which their delegates shall be seated.

If a minority of a church desires to be organized, they may petition district meeting for a committee of elders. This committee shall call a council in said church, and, after hearing the reasons for and against a separate organization, shall make a report of its findings. If this report is favorable to the petitioners, and is accepted by the church, the same procedure as in article one applies for organization and acceptance by district meeting.

If the report of the committee of elders, favoring the new organization, is rejected by the church, the committee may, if deemed advisable by them, organize the petitioners as outlined above, provided two thirds of the members residing in said territory are agreed.

If the report of the committee of elders is unfavorable to the petitioners they shall be counseled to work in harmony with all the brethren in a spirit of love and brotherhood for the best interests of the whole church and to exercise patience until such a time as conditions may be more favorable.

DISORGANIZING CHURCHES

When it becomes necessary to disorganize a local church, the procedure, established by the General Conference of 1898, and revised in keeping with subsequent decisions, is as follows:

Let the request be made to District Meeting for disorganization. District Meeting shall then appoint a committee of elders or ask the district Ministry and Home Mission Commission to visit said church and grant letters of membership to all members, assigning them to adjoining congregations.

The following query was passed by the Conference of 1925:

We, the Pleasant Hill church, through the District Meeting of Southern Ohio, pray the Annual Conference assembled at Winona Lake, to decide that

the elders assembled at District Elders' Meeting, shall consider carefully the spiritual welfare of these decaying churches, and if in their judgment it seems wise, they shall request District Meeting for a committee of three experienced elders to labor with said churches. If in the judgment of the committee it seems wise they shall issue letters of recommendation to the members assigning them to adjoining congregations, and direct the disposition of the property to the best advantage, considering all questions involved relating to it.

The disposition of whatever property the church may hold is a matter that should be carefully handled. The laws of states are not uniform. Then, too, land is often deeded to a church to be used as long as the church needs it. (It is recommended that the necessary arrangements be made so that the disposition of church property be the responsibility of the proper district authorities.)

THE LOCAL CHURCH AT WORK

The following recommendations for the local church are suggestive and permissive only. It is felt that local churches would benefit by experimentation with these recommendations working toward greater unity in local church organization.

I. Introductory

A. What the Church Is

The church is the "body of Christ," the "family of God," "the household of faith," and "the pillar and ground of the truth." The church is divine in its mission and purpose. Its central purpose is evangelism. It is the organism through which Christ works for the redemption of individuals and to make the Christian principles operative in all human and social relationships. It is the school of Christlike character, the Christian fellowship with Christ at the center, and the Christian community of believers consecrated to Christlike living.

B. Functions of the Church

1. To win persons to Christ through evangelism.
2. To teach and preach the Bible and Christian truth as revealed in the Bible.
3. To provide enriching experiences in worship.
4. To inspire persons and help individuals toward the imitation of Jesus.
5. To educate church members in the history, ideals, and sacraments of the church.
6. To provide an effective educational program in family living, missionary education, stewardship, peace, temperance, leadership education, and recreation.

7. To develop Christian fellowship within the local church, and also with other Christian churches and other races.

8. To provide effective pastoral care and counseling for individuals.

9. To enlist church members in Christian service projects.

10. To develop a fellowship of spiritual, emotional, physical, and material sharing.

11. To bring the principles of Christ to bear in all human and social relationships.

C. Principles of Local Church Organization

1. The local church is the basic unit of all church organization.

2. The organization of the local church should be determined by the needs of the program.

3. The whole organization should be designed to cultivate loyalty to Christ and to the differing phases of church life.

4. The principles of unity, efficiency, and democracy should be exercised in developing the church organization along with the desirability of using a large number of members in the church program.

5. The church board should become the unifying and co-ordinating element in the local church program.

6. All officers and committee members should be trained for the work assigned to them.

7. Efforts should be made to enlist new personnel on committees. No one person should hold more than one or two church offices. Tenure of office in the local church should be similar to tenure in district and Brotherhood offices: two terms of three to five years. After the lapse of a year individuals would again be eligible for office.

II. The Church Council

A. Functions

The church council is the final authority of the local congregation; it is the church fellowship in business session. It evaluates past accomplishments, hears reports, studies present conditions, elects officers, and makes plans for the future program of the church; it provides opportunity for the sharing and co-ordination of differing points of view.

B. Rules of Order

The method of transacting business in deliberative bodies is sufficiently indicated for ordinary purposes in the following summary

of the most important points involved. Robert's *Rules of Order* may be consulted for more complete information.

1. The presiding officer in a deliberative assembly is known as chairman, president, and so forth. In religious assemblies he is often called the moderator.

2. The moderator is generally assisted by a clerk or secretary, who arranges the items of business and records the proceedings, called minutes. When much reading is required there is a special officer called the reader, or reading clerk.

3. Questions are ordinarily decided, on motions made and seconded, by a majority vote.

4. Informal and unimportant matters are often disposed of by common consent, indicated by silence. Sometimes the presiding officer may ascertain the will of the meeting on any point by submitting it to vote without the formality of a motion. But the usual method should be followed in all matters of importance or whenever someone objects to any departure from it.

5. In matters of exceptional importance, especially where an important change from a former policy is involved, a two-thirds majority may be required for the adoption of the motion.

6. Any person desiring to make a motion or to speak on any question before the meeting shall rise, address the moderator, and secure his recognition. Motions may be seconded without this formality.

7. When the moderator has stated a motion, duly made and seconded, or caused it to be read, it is in the possession of the meeting, and cannot be withdrawn or removed from consideration except by action or consent of the meeting.

8. With certain exceptions motions are always subject to debate before being put to vote. Two important exceptions are a motion to adjourn and a motion for the previous question.

9. The moderator decides when debate on any motion shall close, but any member may move the previous question.

10. When a motion for the previous question has been carried, discussion on the question ceases and it is put to vote.

11. A question of order may be raised by any member and is decided, without discussion, by the moderator as follows: "The point is well taken," or "The point is not well taken."

12. If the ruling of the moderator is not satisfactory, it is the privilege of any member to appeal the decision. If the appeal is seconded, the moderator states the question: "Shall the decision of

the chair stand as the judgment of the meeting?" After having been open for debate, it is decided as any other question.

13. When it is desired to dismiss a matter without passing on the merits of the question, a motion may be made that it be indefinitely postponed, or that it lie on the table, or that it be respectfully returned. The effect of all three actions is the same, except that when a question is "tabled" it may, on motion, be taken up again later. When a question is "returned," it is regarded as not having been considered and does not appear in the minutes.

14. A motion to adjourn is always in order, except when a member is speaking, when voting is in progress, or when no business has been transacted since a motion to adjourn has been voted down.

15. Any action may be reconsidered, provided the motion for reconsideration be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. The passing of such a motion does not reverse the former action, but places the subject before the meeting as if it had not been acted upon at all.

16. When it is desired to change the form or purport of a motion already before the meeting, this may be done through a motion to amend. The adoption of such a motion, proposing the desired changes, does not dispose of the matter, but merely places the original motion before the meeting in its amended form.

17. When a motion is before the meeting, a motion of entirely different purport, but pertaining to the same matter, may be offered as a substitute. The passing of a substitute motion disposes of the question. The failure of such a motion leaves the original motion before the meeting.

18. Any subject may be referred to a committee when more careful consideration is required than can be given in the meeting. The entire disposition of the matter may be entrusted to the committee, or, as usually, the committee may be instructed to study the subject and report its findings to a later meeting.

19. The more common methods of taking a vote are by a vocal response, by raising the hand, or by standing.

20. In cases of special importance or delicacy the voting is done by ballot.

21. The ballot method is commonly used in the election of all important officers, the members simply writing on the ballots the names of the persons for whom they wish to vote.

22. Elections may be facilitated by nominations made in the open meeting or by a committee previously appointed for this purpose. It is

not advisable, however, to make nominations for the most important officers, such as presiding elder, or in any case where it is not satisfactory to all concerned. When there is a long list of offices to be filled, for which nominations have been made, progress may be facilitated by numbering the names and posting them where they can be seen by all, so that they may be voted for by writing the numbers only. Sometimes ballots are used on which the nominations have been printed, with blank spaces for writing in other names.

23. It is sometimes found desirable in deliberative bodies to limit the length of speeches, as well as the number a member may make on the same subject.

24. Members should stand while addressing the moderator or the assembly, as, of course, the moderator should in addressing the assembly or any member. In very small assemblies, as committees, this rule is not commonly observed.

III. The Church Board

It is suggested that a church board with administrative power be set up in each church for the purpose of unifying the work of the local church. Two plans for such a board are suggested below. The purpose of a church board, regardless of the plan of organization used, should be to bring about the fullest possible unity and development of the church and the highest efficiency in the performance of its work.

A. Plan One

A church board of from five to twelve members (depending on the size of the church) who will dedicate themselves fully to the Christian task should be elected by the church council. In this selection men, women, and youth should be considered in order that all interests of the church might be represented.

1. Term of Service

Each member of the church board should serve a term of three years and should not succeed himself more than once without an interim lapse of a year. Terms of service should be staggered for continuity.

2. Qualifications

- a. Consecrated Christian living in home, church and community
- b. Faithful service in local church
- c. Loyalty to the ideals and program of the Church of the

Brethren

d. A working knowledge and understanding of the church program

e. Ability to exercise good judgment in the solution of church problems

3. The board shall elect its own officers.

4. Functions

Planning, supervising, and co-ordinating the work of the church through the fields of the ministry, missions and evangelism, Christian education, stewardship, property and finance, music and worship, service and relief, and social and recreational life.

5. Execution of the Program and Policies of the Church Board

a. The church board shall itself carry out the functions delineated above, following something of the commissions pattern of the General Brotherhood Board; or, with the approval of the church council, it shall select additional commission or committee members to carry out these functions. These commission members shall attend the meetings of the church board.

b. The chairmen of the group organizations—such as men's work, women's work, youth work—and the children's director should be invited to attend the board meetings with the right to participate in the discussions without vote.

c. The board shall elect its own officers.

d. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board without right to vote.

B. Plan Two

A local church board should be composed of members representing the functional groups of the entire church. Members of this board should be selected by virtue of their offices with the respective functional groups. In small churches the functional interests may be represented by an individual rather than a committee and they would then make up the local church board. In larger churches each committee and interest group selects its chairman or president, who in turn becomes a member of the local church board.

1. Composition of the Board

a. Elder or moderator

b. Clerk

c. Chairman of the ministry and extension department

d. Chairman of the finance department

e. Chairman of the trustee department

f. Chairman of the personnel and nomination department

- g. Chairman of the deacons
- h. Chairman of the music and worship department
- i. Adult director
- j. Youth director
- k. Children's director
- l. Director of women's work
- m. Director of men's work

2. Functions

Planning, supervising and co-ordinating the work of the church through the fields of the ministry, missions and evangelism, Christian education, stewardship, property and finance, music and worship, service and relief, and social and recreational life. Preparing the agenda for council meeting.

3. The board shall elect its own officers.

4. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board without privilege of voting.

IV. *The Official Board*

The official board is composed of elders, ministers, and deacons. They are responsible for the general oversight of the church's spiritual welfare and church discipline.

V. *The Officials of the Church*

A. Ordained Elders

Ordained elders, in addition to being members of the official board of their local churches, may serve as elders-in-charge of their own local churches or of other churches which might call them to that office. They should be eager and willing to serve the church and to "feed the flock" locally and through the district, the regional, and the general church program in any way that they can.

B. Elder-in-charge or Moderator of the Local Church*

The moderator of a local church should seek to be helpful to the pastor and to the church in every way he can. It is his responsibility to preside at all general business sessions or council meetings unless he has designated someone to serve in his stead. He should work co-operatively and carefully with the local church board in administering the church program. Consecrated and able laymen or ordained ministers may be called by the church to become moderators of local churches, in which case they would perform the functions outlined above.

* See the footnote on the next page.

Congregations which choose their moderators from the laity shall secure confirmation from the district board of administration or from the elders' body.

C. The Pastor*

The pastor is the spiritual shepherd of the church. He serves as an adviser on the church program, working through church boards and committees. He should work through other people and inspire others to serve. He should endeavor to organize and educate his people to serve in personal evangelism, visiting, counseling, leading in worship and sometimes in preaching. The pastor's central work is the spiritual care of the parish.

The pastor is an ex-officio member of all church boards and committees.

D. The Deacons

It is the special responsibility of the deacons to help care for the needy within the congregation, and to help maintain the church fellowship. They can help the pastor in counseling and in ministering to the sick, the unfortunate, and the needy. They may assist with the anointing services. In addition to these, they should assume general oversight of the physical arrangements for observing the ordinances of the church, such as baptism and love feasts.

E. The Church Clerk

The church clerk should be elected for a term of three years. He should record the proceedings of church business meetings, act as the secretary of the church board, keep an official membership list in co-operation with the elder or pastor, issue letters of membership, act

* The office of moderator is a carry-over from the days of the free ministry when the responsibility for the work in a local church needed to be delegated to a responsible person. A careful study of the New Testament's words relating to the work of the ministry and a careful analysis of organizational procedures indicate that a congregation cannot have two heads. Consequently, when a church changes from the free to the paid ministry, a clear understanding of relationships is necessary. According to item 4, section I, of the Ministerial Placement Policy, the elder is the official head of the congregation. He presides at church councils. He is the chief counselor or adviser to the pastor. The pastor is the executive head, the active leader in its program and activities, its spiritual counselor and shepherd of the flock. It should be noted that the pastor may be his own elder and that the elder need not be a resident of the congregation. When the pastor is his own moderator it is sometimes advisable to name an associate who may well be of an adjoining congregation or a member of the district ministry and home mission commission. In any case it is unethical for the pastor to preside as elder whenever the pastoral relationship is under consideration.

as the custodian of important church documents, prepare local, district and Brotherhood reports, and act as, or work with, the church historian.

F. The Church Treasurer

The church treasurer should be elected for a term of three years. He should pay all properly authorized bills, keep accurate records of all monies and church expenditures, and give quarterly financial reports.

VI. The Nominating Committee

The nominating committee should be composed of from three to five members who are elected by the church council for three-year terms properly staggered for continuity. The pastor should serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. They should survey the congregation and present to the church council worthy servants as candidates for church offices as requested. As a general rule, they should nominate two candidates for each office to be filled.

VII. The Specialized Activities of the Church

The following specialized activities of the church will be cared for differently in different churches. In certain churches, particularly the smaller churches, they might well be cared for directly by the church board. In other churches they might be cared for by special committees whose chairmen would be members of the church board or who represent them on the church board.

A. The Ministerial Function (ministerial or pastoral board, or equivalent)

The ministerial function is to serve as adviser to the pastor; it should be helpful in educating the congregation in church-pastor relationships; it should recommend ministers to the church when a new pastor is needed; it should carry out the details of employing the pastor for the church; it should supply speakers in the absence of the pastor and recommend evangelists for the church.

(B. The Music and Worship Function (music and worship committee or commission)

The music and worship function is to assist the pastor or moderator in the total music and worship program of the church. It should sponsor special projects such as schools of music and of hymn appreciation; it should help to supervise the choir, appoint the choir director, appoint music leaders and instrumentalists, provide special music, educate the congregation in sacred music, and provide music materials. In addition, it might well help to educate the congregation in the

fine art of group worship, family worship and personal devotions. It should provide worship materials needed by the various church and family groups; it should sponsor special projects of worship such as retreats and schools of prayer; it should study and provide helpful esthetics of worship such as furniture, pictures, flowers, and other physical equipment. The worship function could also include supervision of ushers.

C. The Evangelistic and Missionary Function

(This function may be combined with that of the ministerial or pastoral boards or their equivalent.) The evangelistic and missionary function should be to recommend local mission projects, to stimulate interest in and educate for home and foreign missions, to promote the Brotherhood offerings for missions, to seek and to stimulate recruits for mission work. It should co-operate with the education function in a school of missions.

D. The Christian Education Function (Christian education board or commission)

The function of Christian education is to plan and direct the total educational program of the church, to outline objectives for the teaching program of the church, to recommend curriculum and program for the educational work of the church, to plan for leadership education, to supervise Sunday evening group meetings and weekday Christian education, to recommend nominees to the nominating committee or to the church board for appointment—as workers in special areas, such as temperance, peace, home and family, stewardship, visual education, recreation—to provide educational materials for the church, to provide a library and a librarian, and to promote special church conferences and church camps.

1. Women's Work

The plan of the local women's work organization calls for a cabinet of women's work with a director or president (may have vice-president), a secretary-treasurer, a director of missions, a director of aid service, a director of home builders, a director of peace and temperance, and a director of Bible study. The women's work cabinet will meet frequently as a committee to plan for all the interests included in women's work.

Women's work in the local church will find its greatest expression of service when it co-operates fully with the local church organization. Women's work should be represented on the church cabinet or administrative board by the local women's work director or president. Women's work measures the success of its program by the degree

to which it enlists every woman in creative tasks which contribute to the moral and spiritual life of the church.

Women's work of the local church co-operates with district, regional, and national women's work organizations.

2. Men's Work

The men's work may organize either through a men's Bible class or through a separate organization including all adult males. They should co-operate with the district and Brotherhood organizations. They will promote father-and-son relations, missions, church plant improvement in co-operation with the trustees and finance boards, community service projects, personal and fellowship evangelism, temperance and peace education and action, efforts to increase moral and civic righteousness, efforts to foster and keep alive through the fellowship of the church the inherent Brethren principle of community solidarity, and such other matters as may be agreed upon. It is the responsibility of men's work to secure the support and co-operation of each male member of the church, not only in its activities and program, but also in the total program of the church. The chairman of men's work will be a member of the church board of administration.

3. The Youth Fellowship

All the activities of the church that are designed specifically for young people, whether study, worship, recreation, or service, come under the category of the CBYF (Church of the Brethren Youth Fellowship). This group includes all those between the ages of twelve and twenty-five, though where it is at all practical the activities and organization should be divided as follows: junior highs or intermediates (grades seven, eight, and nine); senior highs (through high school); and older youth.

The CBYF organization parallels—but does not compete with—that of the church. The local group is the heart of the structure. There are youth cabinets on the district and regional levels to help the local groups and to direct wider-scale activities. The regional presidents constitute the National Youth Cabinet. There are many “non-local” activities in which youth from the local group should be urged to participate. These include: district and regional rallies and conferences; workshops, laboratories and retreats; summer camps; work camps and seminars; and Brethren volunteer service, the program in which young people can give a year on subsistence support serving in various projects in this country and Europe.

The local program usually consists of a Sunday-school class

session and an additional regular meeting (often weekly on Sunday evenings). Besides these there are as many special sessions, parties, outings, service projects, week-end camps, and whatever else as the group sees fit to sponsor. The Brotherhood produces several types of literature to aid this program: the *Brethren Youth Quarterly* (Sunday-school lessons of the Uniform Series); the Intermediate Cycle Graded Lessons (lessons scaled to the three years of the junior-high experience); *Horizons* (a weekly story paper for all ages of young people, includes monthly outlines and helps for the evening CBYF meetings); and occasional releases, pamphlets, and study units on specific topics.

Youth Serves is the stewardship program of the CBYF. Young people are urged to keep a separate record of their giving as a means of checking to see that they are doing their share in this regard. All money given by youth, whether to the local or Brotherhood program or to special projects, should be counted for Youth Serves.

Each local group is, of course, free to organize in the way that will best meet its needs, but the following commission pattern is now being recommended as a means of making the work of the CBYF more effective. This structure was originally designed by the United Christian Youth Movement and has been adopted by the youth fellowships of most of the major Protestant denominations, thus giving those who use it a common basis for sharing with other Christian youth.

Five commissions are constituted within the group (likely every CBYF'er will be assigned to some commission). These commissions are intended to provide a comprehensive coverage of CBYF interests. They are: (1) *commission on Christian faith*, including Christian beliefs, personal Christian commitment, personal enrichment and growth (Bible study, prayer, worship, cell group experience), personal conduct (Christian moral standards), the Christian heritage, the meaning of church membership; (2) *commission on Christian witness*, including evangelism (personal and group), stewardship (time, talents and material possessions), churchmanship (participation in the life of the local church), Christian vocation (all vocations); (3) *commission on Christian outreach*, including home missions, foreign missions, the ecumenical movement, interchurch aid (relief and reconstruction), peace and world order; (4) *commission on Christian citizenship*, including service to the local church, service to the community, intergroup relations (interracial, intercultural, interfaith), industrial relations, economic problems, social problems (alcohol, dope addiction, gambling, juvenile delinquency, etc.); and (5) *commission on Christian fellowship*, including the local church as a fellowship,

Christian home life, boy-girl relations, recreation, interchurch relations (denominational and interdenominational), leisure time, creative arts, service to members of the armed forces and conscientious objectors.

The commission organizes and directs all activities—study, worship, and action—in its area of concern. For groups that are too small to support five commissions, the commissions on faith and witness and those on outreach and citizenship can be combined to make a total of three.

The CBYF cabinet will be made up of the five commission chairmen with their adult leaders. These persons could carry executive duties (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer) in addition to their commission responsibilities; or some groups might want a larger cabinet, lodging the executive and the commission functions in separate people.

The commission plan is designed to make for wider participation in the work of the CBYF program and as a safeguard against a group riding one program area at the expense of other interests with which youths should be concerned. Detailed manuals on the organization and program of the cabinet and the five commissions are available from the Youth Department, General Brotherhood Board, 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois.

4. The Children's Department

The children's department should be organized to provide a balanced program of Christian experiences to nurture each child and promote his total growth from birth through eleven years. This program includes summer and weekday activities as well as church school for children, and opportunities for training and study on the part of teachers and parents.

Supervision of the children's department should be carried by a qualified director of children's work who should be chosen each year by the board of Christian education. This director should work with the pastor, the superintendent, and the board of Christian education to integrate children's work with the total program of Christian education and to get administrative approval for the program planned for the children's division by the director and the superintendents of the different departments.

In order to have a well-organized children's department, special consideration should be given to grouping, equipment, curriculum, types of experiences for each age group, program balance, enrichment material, music, worship, selecting and training of teachers,

community outreach and evangelism, and adequate presentation of the unique emphases of our Brethren heritage.

5. Leadership Training

The church should provide training for all present and prospective workers. The following are some of the aids that may be used:

a. Workers' conferences. It is recommended that there be a workers' conference, meeting monthly or at least quarterly, composed of the pastor, the Sunday-school superintendent, all general officers of the church and Sunday-school, and all teachers and committee members. It should be planned for by an officially designated committee, with the pastor or Sunday-school superintendent serving as chairman.

b. Placing in the hands of trustees, ushers, treasurer, janitor, etc., available printed materials dealing with the work of the office involved.

c. Retreats and discussion groups in which the functions of various officers are considered.

d. Personal interviews by the pastor or some other competent person concerning the work involved.

e. Training classes and schools in the local church, community, and district.

f. Attendance at conventions and conferences.

g. A workers' library.

h. The Elgin Loan Library

6. The Church School

The church school is the organized educational program of the congregation, with the Sunday session as an important feature. The superintendent is in charge of this program and works in co-operation with the minister. Major responsibilities of the superintendent are:

a. Provide along with the board of Christian education, or church cabinet, and other school leaders for an adequate and properly functioning program of Christian education in the local church.

b. Act as executive head of the entire school. The directors or age group superintendents form the administrative council.

c. Preside at assemblies of the school and plan for worship services as needs dictate.

E. The Christian Service Function (Brethren service commission)

The Christian service function should promote interest and support for the Brotherhood service program; it should stimulate interest in a dynamic approach to peace; it should enlist church members in local service activities in co-operation with men's and women's work;

it should give vocational guidance to members of the church; it should work in behalf of aiding Brethren to settle in the church community; it should promote projects of mutual sharing; it should co-operate with the Christian education function in peace education; it should assume responsibility for welfare work in the congregation in behalf of the poor and unfortunate.

F. The Christian Stewardship Function (finance board or commission)

The Christian stewardship function should prepare a church budget to be submitted to the church board; it should plan and direct the every-member canvass or experience other methods of supporting the budget; it should receive and disburse church money as authorized by church council; it should co-operate with the Christian education function in stewardship education; it should interpret the financial condition of the church and the trends in giving.

G. The Properties Function (board of trustees, or equivalent)

The properties function is to hold for the church the title of all church property, to supervise the care and repair of church property, to consider special requests for the use of church equipment and property, to employ the janitor and supervise his work.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. *The Worship Service*

This is perhaps the most important service of the church. Prayerful and diligent preparation should be made for each service, both on the part of those who lead and those who attend as worshippers. Prayers, Scripture readings, music, and the sermon should be so harmonized and vitalized that men are made aware of the presence of God, come to know and understand His will more perfectly, and are confronted with a decision to more complete surrender to the divine purpose.*

* In some churches it may be desirable to have junior or youth church services. In such cases care should be taken to help children and youth to remember they are a part of the total church. Devices should be used to make the transition to the adult service a significant experience, one to be expectantly anticipated. Children and youth should be used in the conduct of junior and youth church services and such a program should teach them the art of public worship and create within them a spirit of reverence. All the while they should be maturing in their Christian experience. Ways of using junior or older boys and girls who have just come into the adult service should be explored carefully and used wisely.

II. The Church School

The church has a great educational task. It must help boys and girls, young people, and adults grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It must instruct them concerning God's revelation of Himself through His Word. Only the most consecrated persons should be asked to teach. Only the best preparation should be tolerated.* Attention should be given to grading and organization in keeping with the finest educational procedures.

III. Evening Services

A. Fellowship and Recreation

B. Sunday Evening Supper

C. Group Meetings:

1. Nursery

2. Kindergarten and Primary

3. Juniors

4. Junior-Hi CBYF

5. CBYF

6. Young Adults

7. Adults

Note: The Sunday morning educational program should center in Bible study. The Sunday evening program should emphasize the application of the Bible to personal and social problems. The Sunday evening groups should keep in mind the yearly church calendar so that it presents a well-rounded and spiritual diet.

September. Religious education—back to school

October. World-wide communion—stewardship

November. World citizenship—Thanksgiving

December. World Bible Sunday—Christmas—New Year's Eve

January. Missions—Week of Prayer

February. Youth Sunday—brotherhood and race relations—beginning of Lent—evangelism

March and April. Evangelism—doctrine

May. Home and family life—commencement—Memorial Day

June. Children's day—daily vacation Bible school

July and August. Union services and vacation

D. Evening Worship

This service may well represent a different approach to the problem of providing an adequate Christian experience. Music, drama,

* Brethren curriculum materials should be used and only the best methods and equipment should be employed.

visual aids, forums, and discussions by leaders in special fields of Christian living should be given consideration as media by which the church program may be enriched.

IV. Week-end Institutes, All-day Meetings, Preaching Missions, etc.

There seem to be values in occasional efforts that focus our attention upon some specialized interest and bring into the church outside leadership for periods of instructive, intensive effort, and inspiration. Some areas that lend themselves to this type of treatment are: evangelism, Christian doctrine, vocation, religion and health, home and family life, Christian citizenship, stewardship, missions, and recreation.

V. Midweek Services

- A. Prayer Meeting
- B. Bible Study
- C. Family Night
- D. Banquets
- E. Parents' Clubs
- F. Teachers' Meetings
- G. Class Meetings
- H. Church Night
- I. Committee Meetings

The board of administration, or official board, under the leadership of the pastor, should prepare a church calendar arranging for a balanced program, providing for everyone and eliminating conflicts and concentration of meetings within a given period. Care should be taken that the church does not make too many demands upon the time of a few while some are neglected. All unnecessary meetings should be eliminated.

INSTRUCTION IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

I. Preparation for Church Membership

Ministers should take great care in instructing for church membership. Preparatory classes should be held for applicants.

The Commission on Christian Education asked Brother S. Loren Bowman to prepare a manual for use in membership classes. His book is called *Choosing the Christian Way*. A pupil's handbook entitled *I Choose the Christian Way*, by Hazel Kennedy, is to be used in connection with Brother Bowman's book. No members should be received who have not first been thoroughly grounded in the material presented in these authorized books.

The applicant should make a definite commitment on the great principles of the church in the presence of the membership. Various ways of stating it are found on pages 166, 167, 169, and 171.

II. Church Membership and Spiritual Growth

The local church should prayerfully consider the adoption of some such discipline of church membership and spiritual growth as the following. While the voluntary acceptance of such a discipline cannot be too strongly urged, it is to be looked upon as suggestive and not as a legalistic requirement.

A. At least ten minutes of private prayer daily (including prayer for the church and its minister)

B. Fifteen minutes of Bible reading daily

C. Regular fellowship with the Body of Christ

1. Church school

2. Divine worship

3. Love feast and communion

4. Social gatherings

5. A visit to the home of some fellow member at least once a month

D. Tithing with at least 50% going to the church (recognizing this to be a minimum requirement)

E. Reading of the *Gospel Messenger* and at least one other religious periodical selected from a recommended list provided by the book reviewing committee of the Brethren Publishing House

F. The reading of four religious books each year from a list made up by the book reviewing committee of the Brethren Publishing House

G. Regular participation in a service project for the church

H. Attendance at district, regional or Annual Conference at least once in five years

I. Attendance at some interdenominational gathering at least once each year

J. The winning of at least one person to Christ and the church each year

K. Appearance twice each year before the minister to review progress in the Christian life and receive counsel regarding future development

L. Participation in a class in the meaning of church membership before uniting with the church and periodically thereafter

Note: It is suggested that church officials call this discipline to the attention of the members at least once each year.

THE REDEMPTIVE FELLOWSHIP

I. Definition and Function

Counseling and discipline are fundamental to the Christian life. They should begin in the early years of childhood and continue throughout life. By their nature and meaning, counseling and discipline are concerned with the most essential aspects of Christian experience: namely, instruction and growth and correction and redemption. Therefore, it is the special responsibility of the church to provide adequate opportunities for thorough preparation for church membership and Christian growth and for the carrying of special responsibilities of the various church boards and committees.

Ministers should feel specially obligated to put themselves under a fitting physical, mental, moral, and spiritual discipline throughout all the years of their Christian ministry.

Sections II to VIII, which follow, deal particularly with the corrective and redemptive aspects of counseling and discipline, but ministers should recognize that, where the instructional and growth aspects of counseling and discipline have been cared for adequately, the corrective and redemptive aspects can be greatly minimized.

II. Purpose of Counseling and Discipline

The purpose of counseling and discipline is threefold:

A. To bring about the redemption of the individual

B. To preserve the integrity of the church

C. To maintain worthy standards of Christian life and conduct in loyalty to the church and in devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ

III. Agencies for Counseling and Discipline

In keeping with Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 13, counseling and discipline shall be ministered by: (1) the elder, pastor, or ministers of the local church; (2) a special committee; (3) the official board of the local church; (4) the elders' body of the district; or (5) the Standing Committee of the Annual Conference.

IV. Subjects of Counseling and Discipline

The subjects of counseling and discipline shall be all members who have been officially received into the fellowship of the Church of the Brethren.

V. Causes for Counseling and Discipline

The following offenses shall constitute cause for counseling and discipline:

A. Of Lay Members

1. Failure to live up to the teachings of the New Testament
2. Failure to be loyal to the specific emphases of the New Testament as interpreted by the Church of the Brethren
3. Other offenses: immoral conduct; crime; use, manufacture, or sale of intoxicating beverages; dishonesty; fomenting and participating in strife in family, church, community, or national relationships; failure to adjust differences between members of the church according to Matthew 18; failure to maintain Christian standards in all financial dealing; un-Christian family relations, etc.

B. Of Officials of the Church

In addition to offenses that apply to the laity, the following shall constitute special causes for counseling and discipline of officials of the church (deacons, ministers, and elders):

1. Persistent neglect of duties of the office
2. Disseminating doctrines contrary to the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren
3. Failure to maintain exemplary Christian family relations in harmony with the teachings of 1 Timothy 3: 1-9 and Titus 1: 5-9
4. Insubordination and failure to comply with the established doctrines and practices of the Church of the Brethren
5. The use of tobacco

VI. Procedure in Counseling and Discipline

A. Of Lay Members and Local Church Officers

1. Any person who commits an offense against the church shall be approached by the elder, pastor, or minister in the spirit of Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 13. An assiduous effort shall be made to develop within the offending party an attitude which shall cause him to make confession, truly repent, and seek forgiveness.

2. If the foregoing effort fails to secure the desired result, the elder or pastor shall be empowered to appoint a special committee for further counseling with the offending person.

3. In the event that steps 1 and 2, suggested above, are not adequate to restore right relationships, the official board shall appoint a committee of investigation, consisting of two or more members of the official board, whose duty it shall be to seek the facts in the situation carefully and impartially and offer further counsel.

4. If these procedures fail to bring about restoration the offense shall be put in writing by the official board and submitted to the church for final action.

5. In case suspension becomes necessary, the church shall continue to seek for the redemption of the individual involved, and shall strive to bring about his reconciliation with the church.

6. The suspended individual has the right to appeal his case to the elders' body of the district, and if not satisfied with their decision he may appeal to the Standing Committee of the Annual Conference.

B. Offenses of Ordained Ministers and Elders and Moderators of Local Churches

An ordained minister or elder owes his ministry to the district elders' body, is responsible to the same, and shall be disciplined by them.

The following steps shall constitute the procedure in handling cases of discipline involving any ordained minister or elder:

1. The report of any alleged offense, herein beforementioned or otherwise, shall be presented in writing to the moderator, or to one of the officers of the district elders' body, setting forth the charges.

2. The officers of the elders' body shall either appoint or become a committee of investigation and counseling, whose duty it shall be to gather carefully and impartially all the facts relevant to the case, and to counsel with the person involved.

3. The committee of investigation and counseling shall report its findings to the officers of the district elders' body and if, in their judgment, the facts support the accusations presented, the moderator shall bring the matter to the district elders' body.

4. The accused shall have the right to present any written or oral statement in his behalf, and to interrogate the committee of investigation.

5. The elders' body shall have the authority to review and weigh the evidence presented, and to make further investigation if this appears desirable; and shall have jurisdiction in determining the degree of the guilt of the accused and to make the final decision as to whether or not the accused shall be exonerated or removed from the ministry or from the eldership, or from membership in the church, or whether a lesser penalty shall be fixed.

6. The elders' body shall have the authority to receive and consider an application or request for reinstatement into the ministry or eldership. If there is satisfactory evidence that the individual concerned has truly repented and has proved himself worthy of the confidence of the church and of the high calling of the office of the Christian ministry, they are empowered to reinstate him.

7. Any minister has the right of appeal to the Standing Com-

mittee of the Annual Conference if not satisfied with the decision of the district elders' body. Until such time as the Standing Committee reverses the decision of the district elders' body their decision stands.

VII. When Members Do Wrong

The purpose of church discipline is to save the wrongdoer (2 Thessalonians 3: 11-15; 1 Thessalonians 5: 14; 2 Corinthians 2: 5-11) and to maintain the moral standards of the church (1 Corinthians 5).

Though all Christians come short of perfection, "persons who disgrace themselves and the church by doing the immoral or un-Christian act should be disciplined."

The responsibility for guiding church life and disciplining erring members rests primarily on the elders and pastors (2 Timothy 4: 1-5). Let elders and pastors proceed according to Matthew 18 in the spirit of prayer, seeking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. "In case of grave offenses or where the pastor or elder fails to convert the erring member, they should counsel the official body and the church." All the resources of the church should be brought to bear in order that the erring may be reclaimed and the purity of the church be maintained.

VIII. When Members Are Disfellowshipped

This should be done only after every effort has been made to get the erring member to be active and work in harmony and fellowship with the rest of the church in the interest of the cause of the Kingdom. When all efforts have availed nothing, upon recommendation of the official board congregational action should be taken but only after due notice of the pending action has been given the parties affected.

PART FIVE

Ministerial Matters

AN ETHICAL CODE FOR MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS

I. For the Church

1. The church should honor the ministry as a spiritual calling. Faithful officials should be respected and esteemed.

2. The church should desire that its minister may grow spiritually and in his ability to minister to them, and should seek to make it possible for him to do so. For these purposes a weekly holiday and an annual vacation should be provided.

3. There should be clear and just contracts between the church and the pastor. The church should abide scrupulously by the terms of the contract until its expiration unless it is revoked by mutual agreement and proper procedure.

4. The church should recognize that a minister is entitled to an adequate remuneration and should always take the initiative in providing it.

5. The church should provide an adequate and well-kept parsonage (or rented living quarters) for its pastor and family.

6. The church should protect its minister from "factions" and "cliques." It should expect its minister not to take sides with them, but rather to seek to minister to the entire church.

7. The church should not tolerate "loose" and "slipshod" business methods. It should meet its obligations to the pastor and others promptly.

8. The church should not permit its pastor to be the "handy man" of the congregation.

9. The church should not be hasty in extending a pastoral call. Careful investigation and consideration should be given. In seeking and employing a pastor, procedures should be followed as outlined in the Ministerial Placement and Policy statement. (Available from

the Ministry and Home Mission Commission, General Brotherhood Board, Church of the Brethren, 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois.)

10. Under no circumstances should a church consider or even negotiate with two candidates for the pastorate at the same time.

11. Electioneering or campaigning by any group against a candidate for a pastorate or against a pastor should not be tolerated. Hostile or unfriendly criticism of the minister by the church is unethical.

12. Other ministers in the local congregation should be made to feel that they are partners of the pastor in the task of saving souls and in the nurture and work of the church.

13. It is unethical for churches constantly to laud the good qualities of former pastors.

14. The church should recognize that many demands claim the time and energy of a minister. He should not be expected to do the impossible.

15. The church should seek a wholesome relationship to its district, to the region, and to the Brotherhood, and ever welcome the counsel and help of the secretaries and bodies which will promote the welfare and work of each.

16. The church should demonstrate in the lives of its members that the gospel which they proclaim "is the power of God unto salvation."

II. For the Minister

1. The minister should maintain proper professional dignity in all his relationships, both within the church and in the community at large.

2. The minister should give careful consideration to the stewardship of keeping physically fit.

3. There should be clear and just contracts between the pastor and his church. The pastor should abide scrupulously by the terms of the contract until its expiration unless it is revoked by mutual agreement and proper procedure.

4. The minister should receive an adequate salary from the church but his service should never be measured by financial considerations.

5. The minister should nurture and discipline his own spiritual life and strive for professional growth and efficiency in his ministry.

6. The minister should scrupulously guard all confidential and

official information. He should not be swayed by "community gossip" or take sides with factions in his church.

7. The pulpit should not be used as a medium of political, personal, or other harmful or controversial propaganda. The minister should not act as an agent or salesman for any commercial enterprise.

8. The minister should manage his own financial affairs with dignity and honor. He should avoid speculation and debt and pay his bills promptly.

9. The minister should be frank, courteous, and co-operative with the ministers of his own denomination and other denominations. He should not proselyte. He should not render professional service in the congregation of another minister without the consent of that minister, except in an emergency. Professional services in former parishes should rarely, if ever, be performed, and then only after consultation and mutual agreement with the present pastor.

10. The minister should give his time unstintingly to the spiritual service of his people.

11. The minister should not hastily accept the pastoral call of a church. Acceptance should reflect careful consideration and mature judgment, as well as the conviction that God's will is being done.

12. The minister should not seek or consider a call from another church whose pastor has not yet resigned.

13. Electioneering or campaigning by a minister or his supporters for a pastorate should never be permitted. Hostile or unfriendly criticism of the church by the minister is unethical.

14. It is unethical for a minister to bargain between churches under consideration for the pastorate.

15. When starting on a new pastorate, the minister should begin by feeding the flock. He should learn to know his people as soon as possible. He should be slow in setting up new machinery and in upsetting established customs.

16. A minister should not go into a church to replace former workers but to take his place at their side. As pastor he should be creative in discovering definite tasks for his people to undertake.

17. It is unethical for a minister to "meddle" in the affairs of a church after leaving its pastorate or to keep up contacts which may hamper the new pastor in winning the hearts of his people. When a pastor leaves a church, he should leave it.

18. The minister should give due attention to politeness, neat-

ness, and the refinements of life without being mechanical, exclusive, or coldly formal.

19. It is unethical for a minister to speak ill of a fellow minister, especially his predecessor or successor.

20. The minister must not allow unworthy or unimportant interests to deprive the church of his time and service. He should avoid physical labor about the church which should be done by others. On the other hand, he should enjoy some work with his people in joint projects.

21. The pastor or minister should seek a wholesome relationship to others with whom he works, such as his elder or moderator, his local and the district ministerial boards, and the secretaries of the district, the region, and the Brotherhood, welcoming their counsel and help.

22. The minister should consider that "work well done" and duty faithfully discharged is itself "partial recompense for labor."

23. The minister should so live as to witness that the gospel he proclaims "is the power of God unto salvation."

ADVANCEMENT AND STANDARDS IN THE MINISTRY

(1951 Annual Meeting minutes, pages 73 and 74)

I. Calling Candidates to the Ministry

1. Men and women before entering the ministry of the church should feel the call of God to serve. God's call may come in such ways as:

(a) To the individual who, having heard the call, may volunteer to elder, pastor or pastoral board;

(b) Through the church, which may lay it upon the heart of the person to accept and serve after prayer and under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. When such a call of God is felt, it is important that the following procedures outlined by the 1942 Conference be carefully carried out, namely:

(a) "Members of the district ministerial board (or similar responsible persons of the board of administration) should be informed and the two boards (local church official board and district board) should examine the candidate with reference*

* Note: A questionnaire and rating sheet prepared by the office of Ministry and Home Missions should be used in reviewing ministerial qualifications.

- (1) "to his or her aims,
- (2) "to natural ability,
- (3) "to moral and spiritual fitness,
- (4) "to willing preparation for the duties of the ministry."

3. We should exercise great care in licensing men and women to the ministry. They should not be licensed until it is clear that they meet the desired qualifications and possess an attitude of love for Christ and for the Church of the Brethren and its institutions and program.

4. "If and when these boards are satisfied that the applicant qualifies, he or she shall be licensed as directed in the minutes of the Annual Meeting and the order of service as printed in the Minister's Manual" (Annual Meeting minutes, 1942).

5. "... the license of (brethren) may be renewed by the church from year to year, until such brethren either accept and are ordained into the ministry, according to previous decisions, or are discontinued as licensed preachers; or if in the judgment of the church and the district ministerial board the best interest of the church can be served, these brethren may be given license to preach for an indefinite time" (Annual Meeting minutes, 1946).

6. Before renewal of the license to preach, an interview with the licentiate should be held by the official board of the local church and the proper district authorities to ascertain the continued fitness of the licentiate for such renewal.

II. Advancement in the Ministry

1. Men

(a) While the church does not require college and seminary training of all its ministers, it recognizes this as an ideal and urges effort toward this attainment.

A reading course prepared by the Ministry and Home Mission Commission and approved by the General Brotherhood Board and administered by the proper district authorities, should be required of all candidates for the ministry. It will provide reading suitable for growth of:

- (1) Those seeking license to the ministry,
- (2) Those licensed,
- (3) Those ordained to the ministry.

(b) Advancement of licentiates to the ordained ministry should not take place until educational preparation has been completed and/or active ministerial or other church service is to begin. Before

licentiates are ordained, an interview should be held by the official board of the local church and proper district authorities to ascertain the fitness of the licentiate for ordination. (See chapter three, the section entitled "Functions [of the Elders' Body]," II, B, 3.)

(c) At the time of ordination to the ministry the candidate should be instructed in the calling, function, privilege, and dignity of the ministry. He should be urged to consider the ministry a lifetime calling.

(d) Ordination to the eldership should not be hurried. Time should be allowed for growth and the demonstration of able leadership before ordination takes place. It may be initiated and carried out in the following manner (Annual Meeting minutes, 1890, 1927, and 1947):

(1) "The authority to ordain elders shall be vested in the elders of the state districts.

(2) "The elders assembled at district meeting shall consult as to the ordination of all elders to be effected in the district. If the majority of the elders decide that the ordination should be made, the matter shall be referred to the district ministerial board (to have in charge the ordination of ministers to the eldership approved by the elders of the districts—Conference minutes, 1927), who shall go to the church and, in council with it if they find no gospel objections, the ordination shall be made.

(3) "The necessity of ordaining elders may originate with the officers of the church or the elders of the district."

2. Women

(a) "These licenses [of sisters] may be renewed from year to year. When in the judgment of the church and the district ministerial board, their work and interest justify it, they may receive permanent licenses to preach" (Annual Meeting minutes, 1922).

III. Relinquishing the Ministry

If ministers desire to relinquish their ministry, they may present their resignation to the local church and district officials.

MINISTERIAL PLACEMENT AND POLICY

(1951 Annual Meeting minutes, pages 74-78)

The Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board, with the assistance of many persons of the Brotherhood, has given careful study to the revision of the Ministerial Placement Policy adopted by the Hershey Annual Conference of 1936.

This has been done to bring it into accord with present developments in placement procedures which have been found helpful out of experience and to include such changes as were introduced by the adoption of the Report of the Commission of Fifteen in the Wenatchee Annual Conference of 1946 and the Orlando Annual Conference of 1947.

The following recommendations were adopted by Conference and supersede former decisions on these matters.

1. General Recommendations

1. *Ministerial Tenure.* We recommend that the church be committed to the policy of the long pastorate believing that it is productive of the greatest good to both the congregation and the ministry. Wisdom should be exercised by churches in calling pastors and by pastors in accepting calls in order to avoid misfits. Pastoral changes should be made with consideration and harmony.

2. *Ministerial Placement, Supervision, and Transfer.* The official agencies of the church for placement, supervision and transfer are: (a) the local ministerial board; (b) the district ministerial board or ministerial secretary; (c) the regional secretary or ministerial secretary; (d) the secretary of the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board, who serves in the area of co-ordination and counsel as he is needed.

3. *The Pastoral Term.* We recommend that the pastoral term be of indefinite duration and that the right to terminate a pastorate by resignation generally be conceded to the ministry. There should be reasonable notice of a desire to terminate a pastorate either by the minister or by the congregation. It would seem wise to seek to make desired pastoral changes immediately following Easter, to become effective September 1. We would discourage, as much as possible, pastoral changes during the pastoral year.

4. *The Elder-Pastor or Moderator-Pastor Relationship.* The elder or moderator of the congregation shall be considered the official head of the congregation and shall preside at all church councils, especially when the pastoral relationship is under consideration. He should be regarded as the chief counselor and adviser of the pastor in all of his work. The pastor should be considered the spiritual leader of the church, the active leader in its program and activities, the "shepherd of the flock." When conditions warrant, the church may elect the pastor as elder or moderator. In such situations a member of the district ministerial board (or board of administration) should preside in all council meetings when the pastoral relationship is under consideration.

5. *The Pastoral Year.* The pastoral year begins September 1. No change in pastorates should be contemplated at any other time, except where conditions arise which may cause injury to the work of the Kingdom or jeopardize in a personal way the welfare of the minister. Such situations should be adjusted by mutual consent of the church and the minister.

6. *Adjustment of Pastoral Difficulties.* The district ministerial board may make investigations of congregations or pastors, when, in their judgment, conditions warrant them. A congregation, or a minority of the congregation, or the pastor may call upon the district ministerial board for such service. This should be done when the first difficulties arise and while unity may be restored, thus averting serious discord or division. In all such cases, if the work of the district ministerial board, in counsel with the regional executive, is not satisfactory to the parties concerned (minister, church, or minority of the church) they may appeal the case to the district elders' body. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, appeal may be made to the Standing Committee of Annual Conference.

(For further guidance see the section, "Counseling and Discipline," chapter three of this manual, or the minutes of the 1947 Annual Conference.)

II. Procedures in Vacancies and Appointments

1. Extending a Pastoral Call

The pastoral board or committee shall be the official medium through which the congregation shall investigate and negotiate with ministers nominated or recommended for pastoral services in the church.

This board or committee shall seek nominations as suggested in item 2. Having investigated the qualifications of ministers recommended, they shall agree upon one person only whom they shall recommend to the church to employ as pastor. They may consider various persons whose names are presented to them, but only one name shall be given and recommended to the church in council for pastoral employment. When a recommendation is not approved by the church, the local pastoral board shall further study the possible nominees and agree upon another whom they shall recommend to the church in another properly announced council. In no case should a church negotiate with two or more ministers at the same time; neither should it vote on one or the other of two candidates.

Church councils for the consideration of pastoral employment

should be publicly announced at least ten days in advance. If the ten-day advance announcement is impossible, advance announcement may be made by mail to each family, giving the nature and the time of the meeting. This variation should have the approval of the elder, the local ministerial board, and the district ministerial board or secretary. Councils should be called to accept or reject the recommendation of the pastoral board. Such recommendations should be unanimous on the part of the board. Voting in all such councils should be by ballot and should require at least a three-fourths majority to extend the call. The pastoral board may extend a call to a minister to become pastor of the church, upon the terms agreed upon by the ministerial board and the prospective pastor, with the approval of the church. It is well if the call can be made unanimous.

2. *Pastoral Nominations*

Churches desiring a pastor or a change of pastors, and ministers desiring to enter pastoral service, to transfer to a different field, or to consider a call received from a church, should notify the placement agencies, that is, the district ministerial board or ministerial secretary and the regional secretary or ministerial secretary.

It is desirable that, in so far as possible, placement nominations for position come through the district board, in consultation with the regional secretary. The Brotherhood secretary will serve as needed in co-ordination between regions. When men are desired for call across regional lines, clearance should be made between the secretaries of the regions involved before the prospect has been contacted.

Care should be taken in appealing to pastors who have not indicated any desire to change locations, lest their pastoral service be interrupted prematurely with loss to the work of the Kingdom. The district, regional, or Brotherhood secretary should be aware of the situation and be prepared to give guidance in such approaches.

It shall be understood that the pastoral board of the local church has the right, after clearance with the district ministerial board and other placement persons, to submit as a nomination the name of any particular minister of the Church of the Brethren in whom the congregation is especially interested and to whom the committee can give unanimous support. It is the practice and policy of the Church of the Brethren to call as a pastor only one who is a minister in good standing in the Church of the Brethren.

3. *Terminating a Pastorate*

a. *At the minister's initiative.* The minister may for sufficient reasons and of his own initiative terminate his pastorate by resigna-

tion. The resignation should be presented to the pastoral board or corresponding board after careful counseling with them and the district and/or regional placement persons. Such counseling may help give him objectivity and wise guidance in the problems he faces. The pastoral board should receive and discuss the resignation before giving it to the church. Such discussion may reveal ways of adjusting conditions which caused the resignation to be made. If the resignation seems timely, they will help the church to receive it kindly, so that the pastoral change can be made without disturbing the unity and welfare of the church. The pastoral board should present the pastor's resignation to the congregation.

b. *At the pastoral board's initiative.* The pastoral board of the congregation or corresponding board, after carefully counseling with him and the district and/or regional persons, may, for sufficient cause, suggest to the pastor the advisability of pastoral change. Care should be taken to be sure of the evidence; it should be more than rumor or hearsay. It would be wise if this were first discussed with the district, regional, or national placement persons. In cases where such suggestion is made to the pastor, he should have reasonable opportunity for consultation and should have opportunity to resign. Here, again, wise counseling with the pastor and/or the church may prevent disharmony in the church.

c. *By vote of the church.* If the pastor does not see fit to resign, the pastoral board, or corresponding board, after counseling with him and the district and/or regional persons, should have authority, if they feel the best interests of the church demand it, to call for a vote on the question of retaining the pastor. Councils for considering this question should be called in the same manner as those for extending a pastoral call. The vote should be taken by ballot and require a three-fourths majority to retain the pastor. After official notice of a negative vote, the pastor will have from three to four months to be placed elsewhere. Churches should be considerate in not working a hardship upon the pastor and his family. Councils for considering pastoral change should be publicly announced at least ten days in advance and should be called for the purpose of accepting or rejecting the recommendation of the pastoral board.

III. Duties of Ministerial Boards and Secretaries

1. The Local Pastoral Board

We recommend that the local church create a board or committee charged with ministerial responsibility, according to one of the plans suggested by the 1947 Annual Conference; that is, a board of

administration, or a pastoral or ministerial board. (See the Annual Meeting minutes, 1947, report on general Brotherhood organization.)

Duties of the Pastoral Board

a. It shall represent the local church in pastoral relationships. It shall receive nominations for pastor, investigate candidates, carry on negotiations with nominees, and assist in pastoral changes as outlined in Section II. It shall work closely with and under the advice and counsel of the district board and other placement persons.

b. It shall arrange for a proper farewell for the outgoing pastor and a reception and service of installation for the new pastor, inviting a district ministerial board member to be present if possible. Everything possible should be done to develop an enthusiasm and loyalty in the church for the new pastor.

c. It shall serve as an advisory board to the pastor. Regular periodic meetings should be held once each quarter or more often in which the interests, the welfare, and the future of the work and of the church-pastor relationship can be discussed. Frank and sympathetic sharing in these meetings may do much to promote the continued good relationships of the church to its pastor.

d. It shall seek to educate the congregation in the ethics of church-pastoral relationships and to maintain the ideas set forth in our code of ethics for congregations and ministers.

e. It shall, in co-operation with the district ministerial board or ministerial secretary, seek to discover worthy talent in the local congregation and lend encouragement in their selection of the ministry as a lifework and in pursuing training for it.

f. It shall counsel with the pastor and arrange for the supply of the pulpit when the pastor must be away or is incapacitated for service. It shall counsel with him and arrange for special speakers, evangelists, etc.

g. It shall carefully consider with the pastor the terms of his employment and interpret these to the congregation. The use of the "Record of Agreement" for pastors is strongly recommended. These can be secured from the regional secretary or the Brotherhood office.

2. *The District Ministerial Board*

a. It shall co-operate with the local pastoral boards, the regional secretary and the secretary of the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board in the placement, supervision and transfer of pastors.

b. It shall seek to discover worthy ministerial talent among

young people of the district and lend encouragement in their selection of the ministry as a lifework and in pursuing training for it.

c. It shall supervise the licensing of candidates for the ministry with the approval of the local congregation, after careful counseling procedure to be assured of the fitness of the candidate for the office.

d. It shall supervise the ordination of licentiates to the full ministry, upon the approval of the local congregation and the district elders' body when the licentiate has shown evidence of worthiness in carrying greater responsibility in the work of the church, has completed training and/or is ready for active service.

e. It shall make provision for the ordination to the eldership of those ministers approved by district elders' body.

f. It shall co-operate with pastoral boards in the proper installation of pastors, in the development and maintenance of harmonious relationships between pastors and churches, and in the education of churches in the ideals set forth in our code of ethics.

g. It shall investigate and pass upon applications for ministerial relief from the district.

h. It shall co-operate with churches in adjusting difficulties which may arise affecting ministers or pastors.

i. It shall co-operate with the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board in the survey of local churches, in keeping on file proper records for the district, and in such other work as may strengthen the ministry of the church.

j. It shall provide district assistance to pastors and churches without pastors in reporting annually and correctly the data called for on the annual report blank.

k. It shall provide district assistance to local churches or pastors in evaluating and reporting the "inactive" and "nonresident" members, as well as those "dropped" from membership, in an effort to secure the most helpful results and the most meaningful reports.

l. It shall set up training conferences, district or sectional, to train local pastoral boards for their work.

m. It shall arrange on-the-job training conferences for pastors of the district.

n. Where a district ministerial secretary carries the ministerial function or responsibility for the district, he shall act in the capacities outlined above for the district ministerial board.

3. The Regional Secretary or Ministerial Secretary

a. He shall work with the district ministerial boards or secretaries in matters of placement, supervision and transfer.

b. Working in co-operation with the district ministerial board or secretary or the local pastoral board, he shall furnish nominations to them for pastor for a local church of the said district.

c. He shall work with district ministerial boards or secretaries in the promotion of desirable church-pastor relationships and the general well-being of the churches.

d. He shall seek to stimulate a wholesome spirit and program of evangelism in co-operation with all concerned.

e. He shall assist district boards or secretaries in on-the-job training conferences for ministers and conferences for pastoral boards.

f. He shall attend meetings of district boards to give counsel and suggestions for enriching and more effectively administering the work.

g. He shall work closely with the seminary, the college(s) of the region, and the Brotherhood ministerial secretary in placement and supervision of summer pastors.

4. *The Secretary of Ministry and Home Missions*

a. He shall co-operate with the regional secretaries and district and local ministerial boards or secretaries in all matters pertaining to pastoral enlistment, placement, supervision, and transfer. He shall seek to help co-ordinate the pastoral supply and demand from one region to another.

b. He shall make an annual survey of the churches and keep a careful file of data concerning congregations and ministers, and provide *Yearbook* material concerning the ministry and the churches of the Brotherhood.

c. He shall seek to enrich the ministry of the church through conferences and institutes and to maintain proper spiritual and educational standards for those who would qualify for the ministry.

d. He shall visit the regions and the districts in order to present the program of the Brotherhood and especially to inspire and encourage the regional boards and district ministerial and other boards in their work.

e. He shall co-operate with the Christian Education Commission, Bethany Biblical Seminary, and our colleges in giving every possible assistance to promising young men during their years of preparation for the ministry of the church.

f. He shall supervise and administer the Brotherhood program of home missions for the Ministry and Home Mission Commission of the General Brotherhood Board, in co-operation with regional and district boards.

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